

# LONE WOLF

AND

子連水狼

# CUB

VOLUME 1

THE  
ASSASSIN'S  
ROAD

By KAZUO KOIKE  
& GOSEKI KOJIMA





子連水猿





# LONE WOLF AND CUB

子連水狼

story  
**KAZUO KOIKE**

art  
**GOSEKI KOJIMA**



**DARK HORSE MANGA™**

translation  
**DANA LEWIS**  
lettering & retouch  
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cover illustration  
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editors  
**DAN HARRIS and MIKE HANSEN**  
assistant editor  
**TIM ERVIN**  
consulting editor  
**TOREN SMITH for STUDIO PROTEUS**  
book design  
**DARIN FABRICK**  
art director  
**MARK COX**

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THE  
ASSASSIN'S  
ROAD

By KAZUO KOIKE  
& GOSEKI KOJIMA

子連れ狼



VOLUME

1

# A NOTE TO READERS

*Lone Wolf and Cub* is famous for its carefully researched re-creation of Edo-Period Japan. To preserve the flavor of the work, we have chosen to retain many Edo-Period terms that have no direct equivalents in English. Japanese is written in a mix of Chinese ideograms and a syllabic writing system, resulting in numerous synonyms. In the glossary, you may encounter words with multiple meanings. These are words written with Chinese ideograms that are pronounced the same but carry different meanings. A Japanese reader seeing the different ideograms would know instantly which meaning it is, but these synonyms can cause confusion when Japanese is spelled out in our alphabet. *O-yurushi o* (please forgive us)!

# LONE WOLF AND CUB



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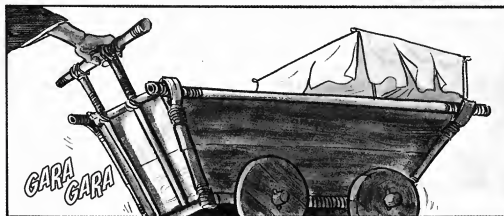




*the first*  
**Son**  
**for**  
**Hize,**  
**Sword**  
**for**  
**Hize**









WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?

FLYING A DAMN FLAG, HE IS.

LOOKS LIKE A SAMURAI, BUT HE'S GOT A KID.

FUCK, HE'S JUST SOME STARVING TRAMP RONIN.



LIKE, HIS WIFE RUNS OFF WITH AN *ASHIGARU*, SEE? CUCKOLDS HIM, WIGGLES HER BUTT IN HIS FACE AND LEAVES HIM WITH THE LITTLE BRAT.

WHAT THE FUCK'S *THAT*? SON FOR HIRE, SWORD FOR HIRE? SUIJO SCHOOL, ITTO ÔGAMI?

ITTO ÔKAMI? ÔKAMI, LIKE IN *WOLF*? ONE-SWORD WOLF?



**GARA GARA**

I UNDERSTAND ABOUT THE SWORD, BUT WHAT'S THIS *SON* STUFF?

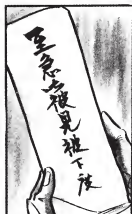
NAW, YA DOPE. IT'S *ÔGAMI*. A SAMURAI NAME.



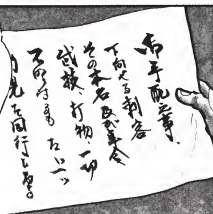
LOOK AT 'IM CUTE LITTLE TYKE.



THE *HEISHI* BYWAY THROUGH THE *NIKKÔ* MOUNTAINS, NEAR THE TOWN OF *IMAICHI*...



"ASSASSIN DISPATCHED FROM EDO. NAME, UNKNOWN. AGE, UNKNOWN. SWORD SCHOOL, WEAPONS, ALL UNKNOWN. HAVE CONFIRMED THAT HE TRAVELS WITH SMALL CHILD. FROM THIS, HE IS OFTEN CALLED...



"LONE WOLF AND CUB. HE IS SAID TO BE HIGHLY DANGEROUS. TAKE IMMEDIATE PRECAUTIONS..." I SEE...

AN ASSASSIN WITH A CHILD.

HEH HEH HEH... HE THOUGHT THAT WOULD THROW US OFF, BUT NOW THAT WE'VE BROKEN HIS DISGUISE, HE'S TRAPPED.



HAVING A  
KID ALONG WILL  
SHACKLE HIM, HAND  
AND FOOT... LONE WOLF  
AND CUB?! DON'T  
MAKE ME LAUGH!



IF WE CAN TAKE  
HIM PRISONER AS OUR  
LORD ELDER SUGITO  
COMMANDS, AND FORCE  
HIM TO NAME HIS  
EMPLOYER, WE'LL HAVE  
UNSHAKEABLE  
EVIDENCE AGAINST  
THE EDO-ELDER.

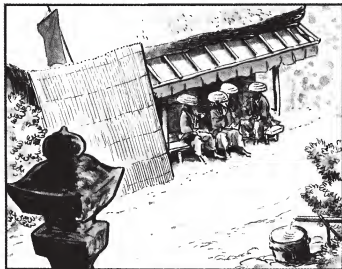
WE JUST SAY  
EDO SENT HIM  
TO ASSASSINATE  
YOUNG LORD  
TAKEMARU.

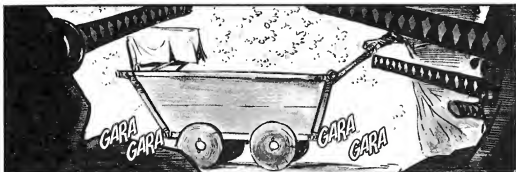


MIBU'S  
THIRTY THOUSAND  
KOKU WILL BE  
IN THE PALM OF  
OUR LORD  
ELDER'S HAND.  
HEH HEH HEH...

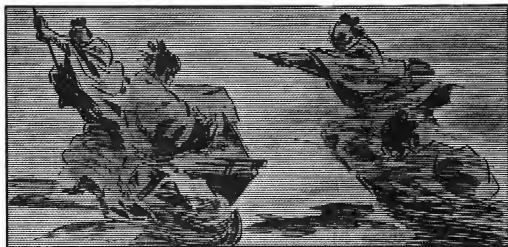
GENSA AND  
HIS MEN SHOULD  
BE SPRINGING  
THE TRAP  
RIGHT NOW...

INDEED...





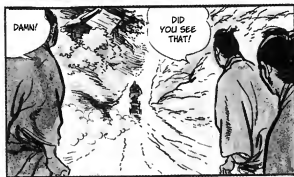
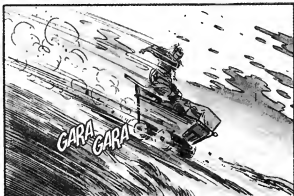
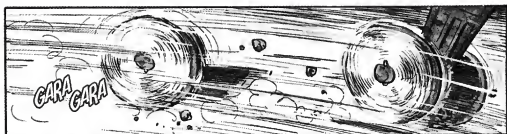


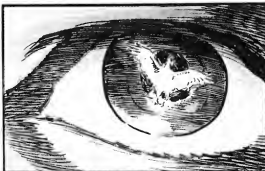
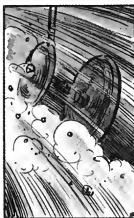


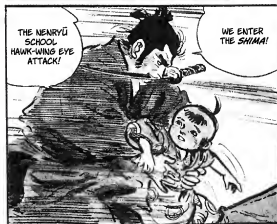




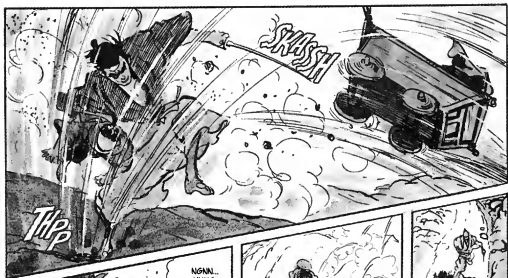












NGAN...  
UNING...



HEH  
HEH HEH...  
YOU FELL  
FOR IT.

I SEE YOU  
RECOGNIZED THE  
NEARYU SCHOOL  
HAWK-WINS EYE ATTACK,  
AND MANAGED TO PROTECT  
YOUR SON'S EYES  
IN TIME.  
IMPRESSIVE...

AND YOUR  
AGILITY IN  
LEAPING FROM THAT  
RUNAWAY CART,  
ALSO MOST  
PRAISEWORTHY.  
BUT NOW,  
IT'S OVER.

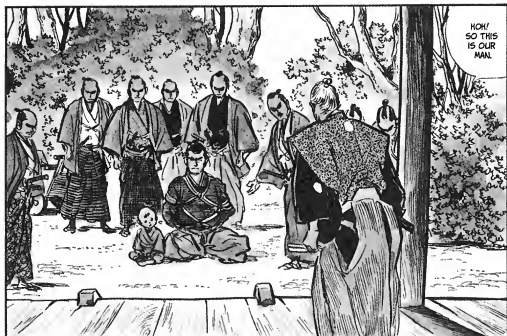












HOW!  
SO THIS  
IS OUR  
MAN.



HOW ABOUT  
IT, FELLOW. TELL  
US ALL YOU KNOW,  
AND WE'LL LET  
YOU LIVE. WE TREAT  
OUR WITNESSES  
WELL.

THINK OF  
YOUR CUTE  
CHILD.



SPEAK!  
WHO HIRED  
YOU?

SPIT IT  
OUT! WHAT'S  
THE NAME OF  
THE MAN WHO  
HIRED YOU,  
ASSASSIN?

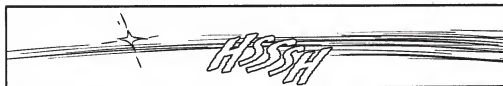
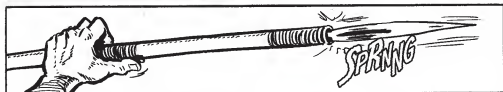
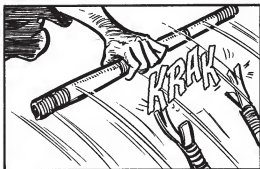


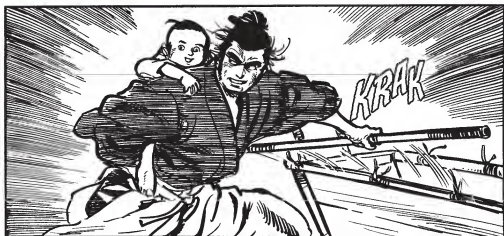
IT'S  
ABOUT TIME  
FOR PEE.

W -  
WHAT?!

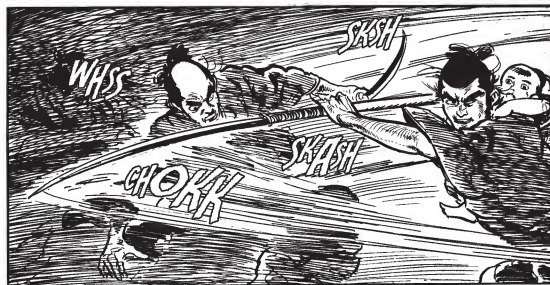


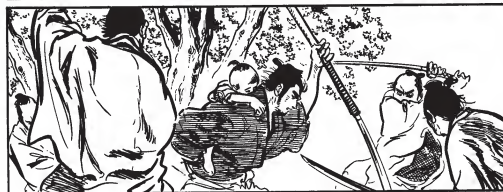
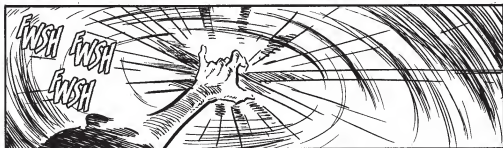


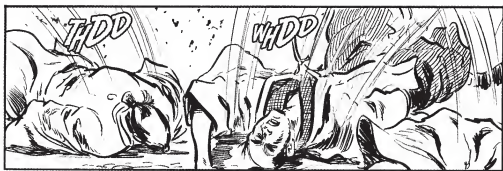




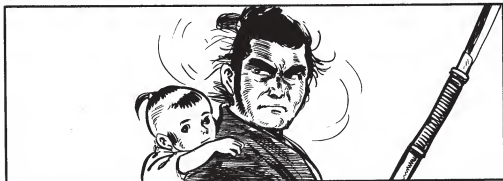


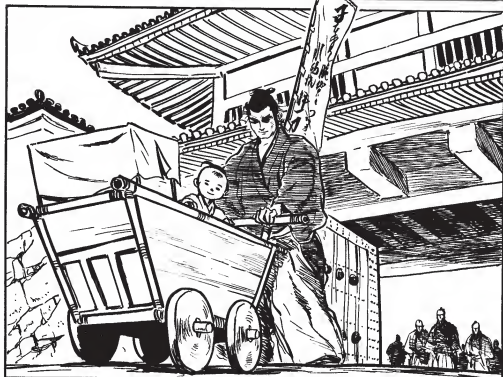
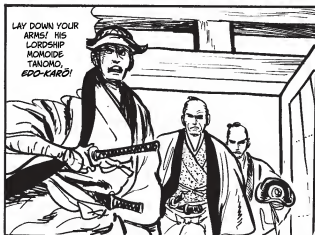


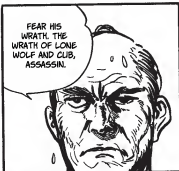














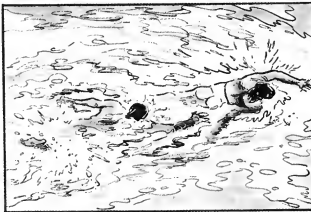
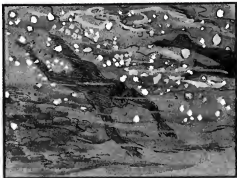
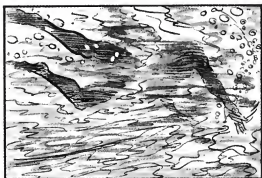


*the second*  
**A Father  
Knows  
His  
Child's  
Heart,  
as Only  
a Child  
Can Know  
His  
Father's**





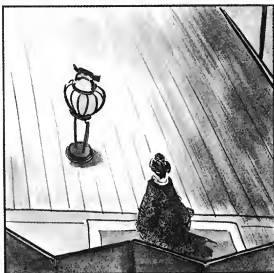


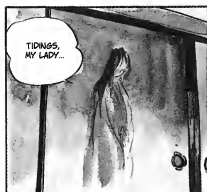












TIDINGS,  
MY LADY...



BAJŌZUTSU  
HAS BEEN  
MURDERED...



HE WAS A  
MAN WHO NEVER  
REMOVED HIS  
CAVALRY PISTOLS,  
NOT EVEN WHEN  
HE SLEPT...

YET HE WAS  
FOUND NAKED,  
STABBED, CARRIED  
DOWNSTREAM ON  
THE NAGI RIVER...



THE  
KILLER?

STILL FREE,  
MY LADY. I HAVE  
ALL OUR MEN  
SEARCHING  
FOR HIM, BUT  
AS FOR NOW...



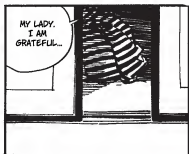
IT WOULD  
SEEM SOMEONE  
HAS SNIFFED OUT  
MY PLANS, MM?  
THEY'VE HIRED  
A MASTER  
KILLER.



INDEED...  
LADY O-KIKU!  
AND HER PEOPLE ARE  
DESPERATE, MY LADY.  
THEY ARE HIRING  
FIGHTERS AS FAST  
AS THEY CAN...

HOH HOH HOH...  
HOW CHARMING.  
WILL THEY  
REALLY DARE  
CONFRONT ME,  
I WONDER?







I SHALL  
MY LADY!  
MY HÔZAN-  
RYŪ  
TECHNIQUE  
KNOWS NO  
EQUAL.



GO-  
KÔSHITSU-  
SAMA!!

AHH...



AUU...!



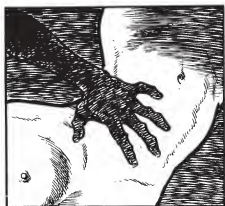
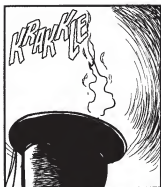
PL...  
PLEDGE LOYALTY  
TO YOUR LADY! TO  
THOSE WHO WOULD  
OFFER THEIR LIFE  
TO MY SERVICE,  
I, TOO...



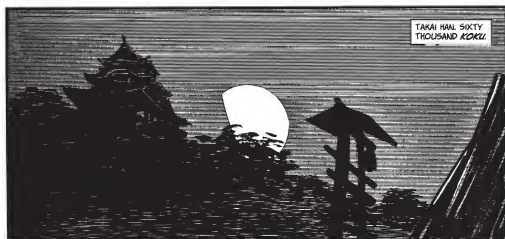
SHALL  
GIVE THEM...  
EVERYTHING!

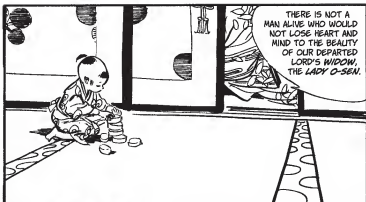
AHH...



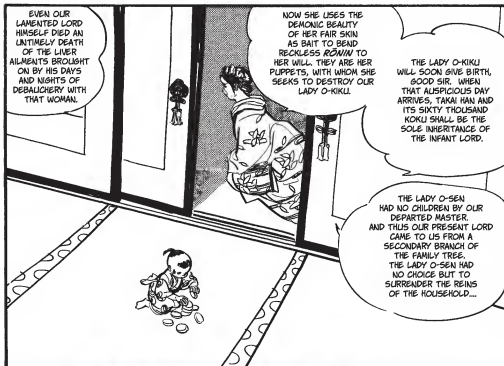








THERE IS NOT A MAN ALIVE WHO WOULD NOT LOSE HEART AND MIND TO THE BEAUTY OF OUR DEPARTED LORD'S WIDOW, THE LADY O-SEN.



EVEN OUR LAMENTED LORD HIMSELF DIED AN UNTIMELY DEATH OF THE LIVER AILMENTS BROUGHT ON BY HIS DAYS AND NIGHTS OF DEBAUCHERY WITH THAT WOMAN.

NOW SHE USES THE DEMONIC BEAUTY OF HER FAIR SKIN AS BAIT TO BEND RECKLESS RONIN TO HER WILL. THEY ARE HER PUPPETS, WITH WHOM SHE SEEKS TO DESTROY OUR LADY O-KIKU.

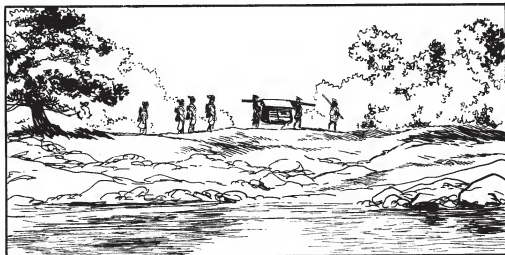
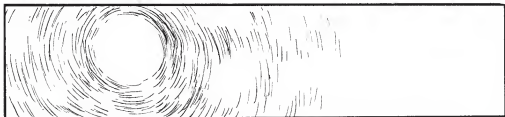
THE LADY O-KIKU WILL SOON GIVE BIRTH, GOOD SIR. WHEN THAT AUSPICIOUS DAY ARRIVES, TAKAI HAN AND ITS SIXTY THOUSAND KOKU SHALL BE THE SOLE INHERITANCE OF THE INFANT LORD.

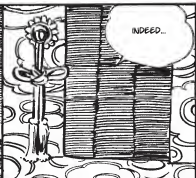
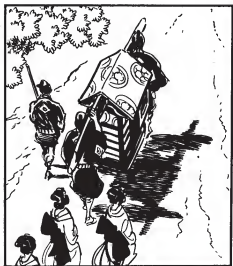
THE LADY O-SEN HAD NO CHILDREN BY OUR DEPARTED MASTER. AND THUS OUR PRESENT LORD CAME TO US FROM A SECONDARY BRANCH OF THE FAMILY TREE. THE LADY O-SEN HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO SURRENDER THE REINS OF THE HOUSEHOLD...



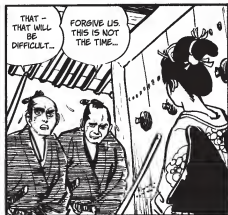
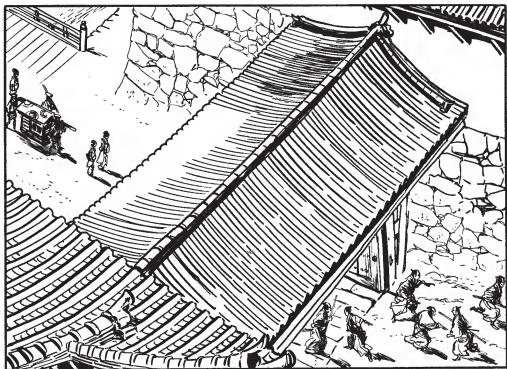
NOW SHE SCHEMES TO CURRY THE FAVOR OF THE SHOGUNATE IN EDO, AND TO FIND A NEW HUSBAND FROM THE SHOGUN'S BLOODLINE. WITH THE POWER OF EDO BEHIND HER, SHE WOULD MAKE HER HUSBAND THE NEXT LORD OF TAKAI HAN.

THE TOKUGAWA CLAN HAS TOO MANY DESCENDANTS TO PLACE THEM ALL IN WORTHY POSTS WITHIN THE SHOGUNATE GOVERNMENT. IN THEIR GREED TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR OWN, THEY WILL SURELY AGREE TO THE LADY O-SEN'S PETITION, AND WILL SECRETLY ASSIST HER SCHEME TO RETURN TO POWER... AND THUS, GOOD SIR, YOUR STRENGTH IS ALL THAT WE CAN COUNT ON. WE HUMBLY BEG YOUR ASSISTANCE.

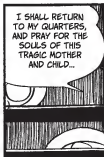


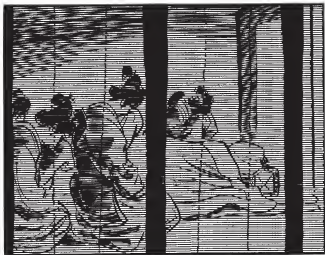




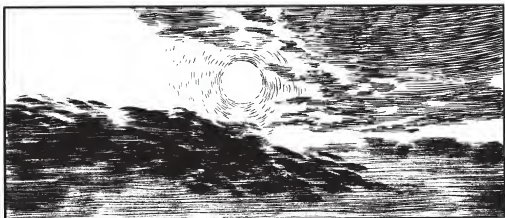




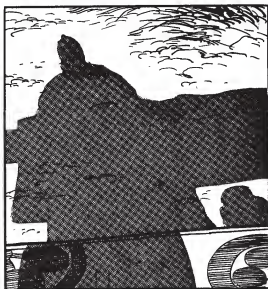
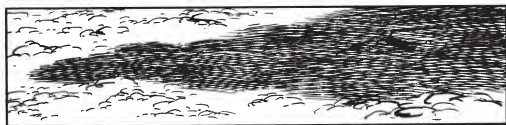




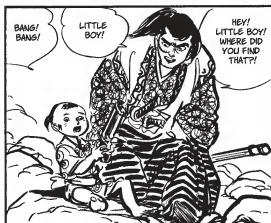


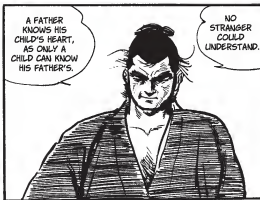
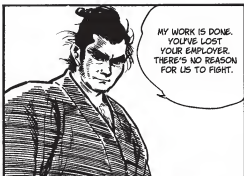




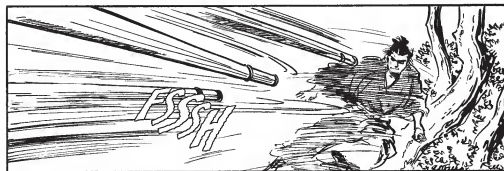
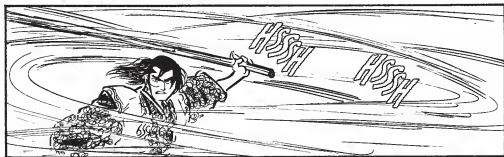
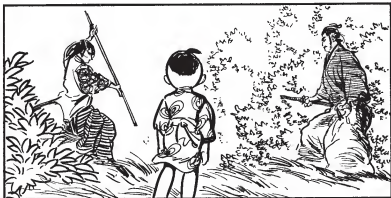
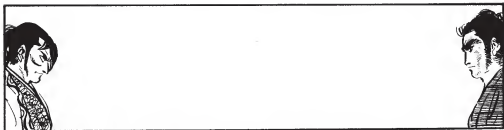


















D - DAMN  
YOU...HOW DID  
YOU KNOW, MY  
HÖZAN-RYŪ  
FURIZUE...



YOU COULD SEE  
MY SKILL WITH  
THE SWORD, AND  
YET YOU RELEASED  
THIS CHILD.



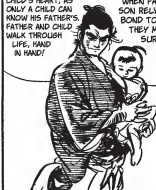
IT WAS THE  
CONFIDENCE OF  
ONE WHO TRUSTS  
WEAPONS OVER  
SKILL. WHAT ELSE  
COULD IT BE BUT  
A FURIZUE?



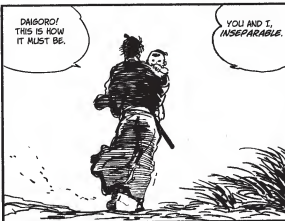
M... MONSTER...  
TO THE VERY END,  
YOU USE YOUR  
OWN CHILD...  
RISK HIS LIFE...

DID NOT I SAY? A  
FATHER KNOWS HIS  
CHILD'S HEART. AS  
ONLY A CHILD CAN  
KNOW HIS FATHER'S.  
FATHER AND CHILD  
WALK THROUGH  
LIFE, HAND  
IN HAND!

THIS IS *SEIKAN*,  
THE BOND OF LIFE.  
WHEN FATHER AND  
SON RELY ON THEIR  
BOND TO DO WHAT  
THEY MUST TO  
SURVIVE...

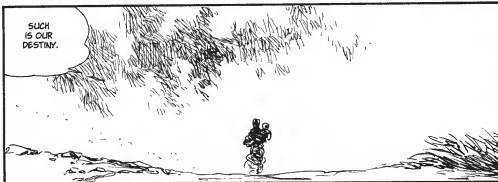


DMSORO!  
THIS IS HOW  
IT MUST BE.



YOU AND I,  
INSEPARABLE.

SUCH  
IS OUR  
DESTINY.







*the third*

**From  
North  
to South,  
From  
West  
to East**

WHAT?  
AN ASSASSIN  
WITH A CHILD?



YES, MY LORD.  
HE IS ACCOMPANIED BY A YOUNG  
BOY, SOME THREE YEARS IN AGE.  
WHETHER IT IS HIS OWN SON,  
OR THEY ARE TOGETHER FOR SOME  
OTHER REASON, NONE CAN TELL. INDEED,  
THE MAN'S AGE, HIS COUNTRY OF  
ORIGIN, ALL ARE CLOAKED IN MYSTERY.  
WHAT IS KNOWN, MY LORD, IS HIS  
DEADLY SKILL. NO ONE HE HAS BEEN  
HIRED TO KILL HAS EVER ESCAPED ALIVE.  
AND THEY SAY HE LEAVES NO  
TRACE OF EVIDENCE BEHIND...

THOSE WHO HIRE HIM MUST  
REVEAL THEIR SECRETS BEFORE  
HE WILL ACCEPT THE JOB. YET,  
THOUGH HE COULD BLACKMAIL THEM  
AT ANY TIME, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE  
THAT ANY HAVE TRIED TO KILL HIM.  
ONCE HE HAS FINISHED HIS WORK,  
IN SHORT, MY LORD, HIS SKILL IS  
SO GREAT THEY DARE NOT TRY.  
AFTER MANY ATTEMPTS, I HAVE  
FINALLY BEEN ABLE TO ESTABLISH  
CONTACT. HE WILL BE HERE,  
MY LORD. TONIGHT.  
AT THE MIDNIGHT HOUR...



I LEAVE IT TO YOU...  
BUT THIS CHILD  
BUSINESS, DOESN'T THAT  
DOUBLE OUR RISK?

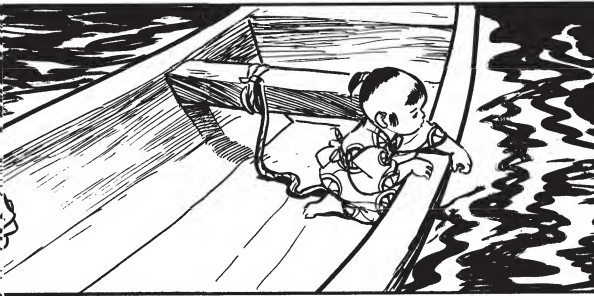
MY LORD,  
RUMOR HAS IT THAT  
THE CHILD HIMSELF  
TAKES PART IN  
THE KILLINGS.

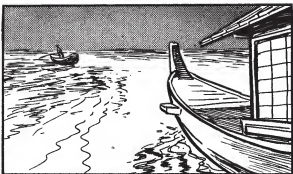


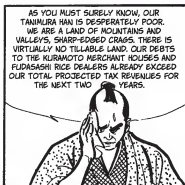
WHAT SAY YOU?



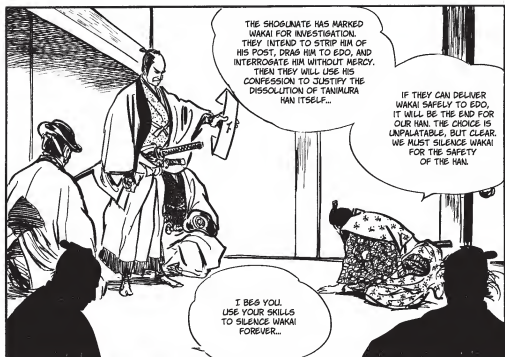
THE CHILD  
OF A WOLF,  
MY LORD,  
IS STILL  
A WOLF.























AS I  
THOUGHT. THEY  
DELIBERATELY  
SLASHED HIM SO  
HE WOULDN'T DIE  
INSTANTLY. THEY  
WANTED HIM TO  
LEAD THEM BACK  
TO YOU...



WH- WHO  
ARE THESE  
PEOPLE?!

THE  
SHOGUNATE'S  
YAMA-  
METSUKE.



YAMA-  
METSUKE?

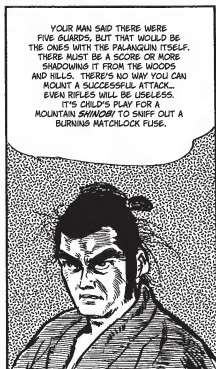
SECRET **METSUKE**  
ENCHARGED WITH  
MONITORING THE  
MOUNTAIN REGIONS  
UNDER THE  
SHOGUNATE'S DIRECT  
CONTROL!

THEY'RE  
TOUGH AND  
HARDENED  
FIGHTERS...



KUCHIKI JŌNAI  
LEADS THEM, A MASTER  
OF THE **ICHIDEN-RYŪ**.  
HIS STANDING QUICK  
DRAW IS FAMOUS  
THROUGHOUT  
THE LAND...

....



YOUR MAN SAID THERE WERE  
FIVE GUARDS, BUT THAT WOULD BE  
THE ONES WITH THE PALANGUIN ITSELF.  
THERE MUST BE A SCORE OR MORE  
SHADOWING IT FROM THE WOODS  
AND HILLS. THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN  
MOUNT A SUCCESSFUL ATTACK...  
EVEN RIFLES WILL BE USELESS.  
IT'S CHILD'S PLAY FOR A  
MOUNTAIN **SHINOBI** TO SNIFF OUT A  
BURNING MATCHLOCK FUSE.

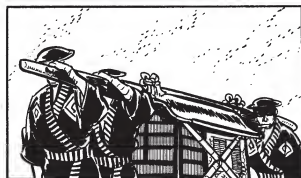
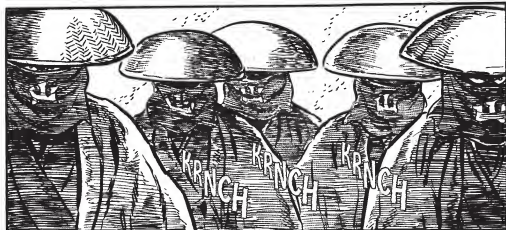
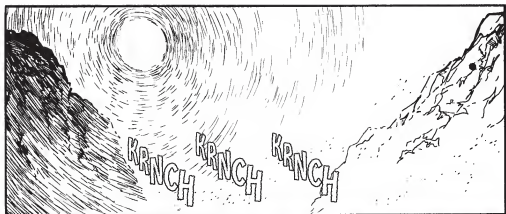


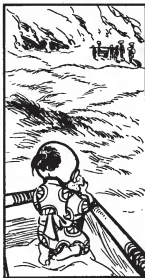
THEN, THEN  
YOU'RE SAYING  
YOU WON'T  
DO IT?!



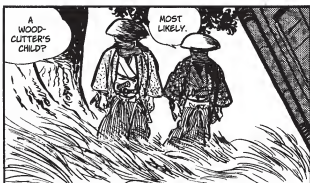
I'M  
SAYING  
I WILL...

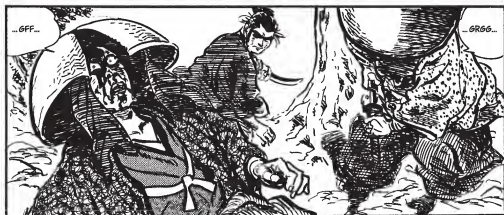




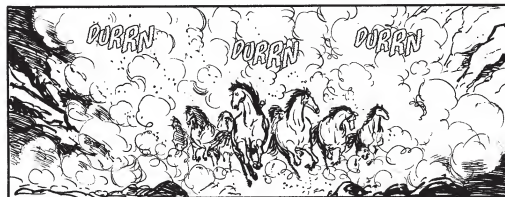
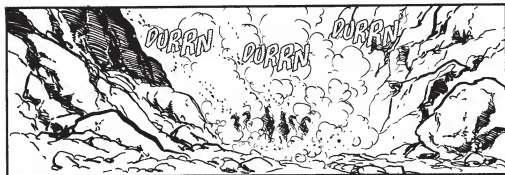
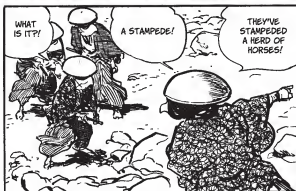




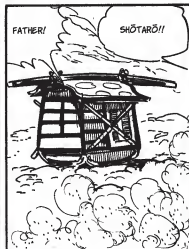


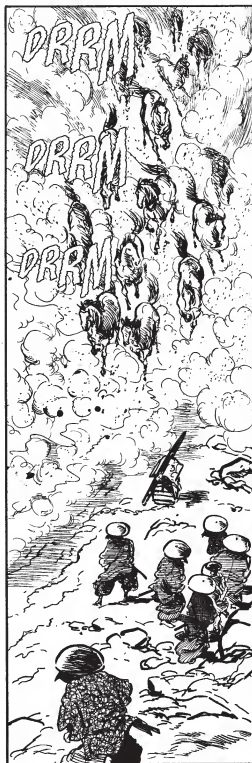


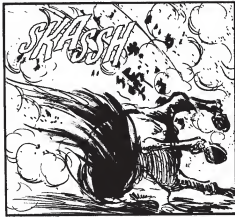
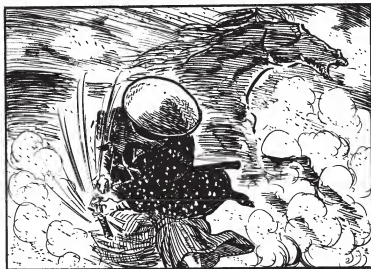






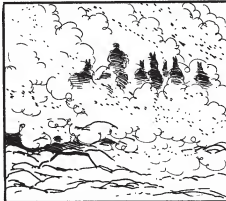
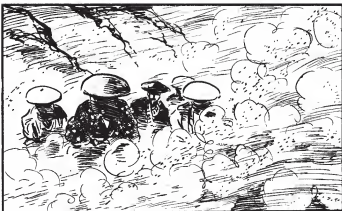








I HAVE  
YOUR CHILD!  
HE'S SAFE  
WITH US!





TH - THIS  
ISN'T WHAT WE  
ASKED FOR!

WHO TOLD  
YOU TO SAVE  
WAKAI'S SON?!



W - WE  
PAID FOR AN  
ASSASSINATION!



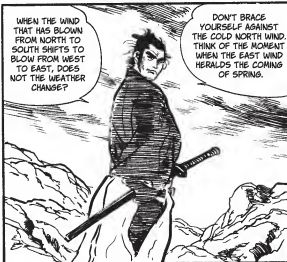
AND SO  
I HAVE  
ASSASSINATED  
HIM



WH -  
WHAT?!



THAT'S  
NONSENSE!  
WAKAI'S STILL  
ALIVE! HOW  
CAN YOU SAY  
THAT?!



WHEN THE WIND  
THAT HAS BLOWN  
FROM NORTH TO  
SOUTH SHIFTS TO  
BLOW FROM WEST  
TO EAST, DOES  
NOT THE WEATHER  
CHANGE?

DON'T BRACE  
YOURSELF AGAINST  
THE COLD NORTH WIND.  
THINK OF THE MOMENT  
WHEN THE EAST WIND  
HERALDS THE COMING  
OF SPRING.



INSPECTOR,  
SIR? WHAT  
DID HE  
MEAN?

HRNN... AS BEST I CAN TELL,  
HE'S SAYING THAT RATHER  
THAN FACE THE COLD NORTH  
WIND AND ALLOW HIMSELF TO  
BE TAKEN TO EDO FOR  
INTERROGATION, IT'S WISER  
FOR WAKAI TO TRUST IN THE  
WEST WIND. THAT IS, PROTECT  
TANIMURA HAN TO THE END, SO  
WE WILL PROTECT  
HIS CHILD TO  
THE END...



HOW!  
THEN, IN  
THAT  
CASE...

WHAT BETTER  
WAY TO A MAN'S  
HEART THAN  
THE BOND OF  
BLOOD BETWEEN  
PARENT  
AND CHILD?



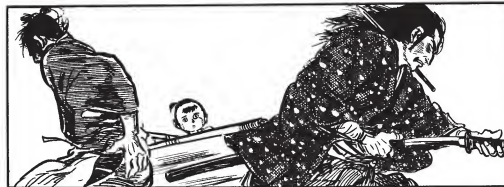
IT'S THE ART OF  
HANNA, FROM SUN Tzu'S  
"ART OF WAR." SUN  
Tzu BROUGHT DOWN THE  
ENEMY'S CASTLE BY  
USING THE FAMILIES OF  
THE DEFENDERS TO  
DIVIDE AND BREAK  
THEIR WILL...

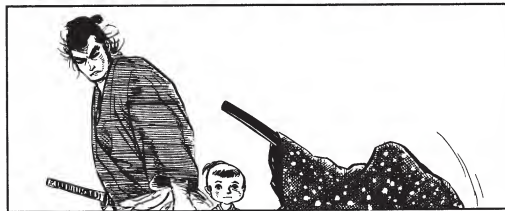


A FORMIDABLE  
FOE... THIS LONE  
WOLF AND CUB.









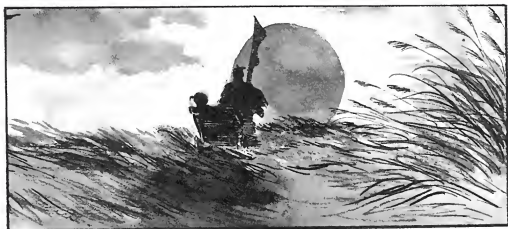






*the fourth*

# **Baby Cast on the River Styx**



UHFF...



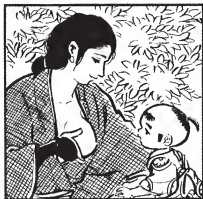
AHL...  
MNG...

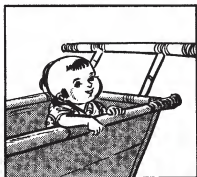


GARA  
GARA









THERE WASN'T TIME TO SPEAK BEFORE, BUT I AM O-KO OF THE HOUSE OF JIZO AT THE IWAKI-JIZUKU WAY STATION. YOUR ROAD LEADS YOU TO IWAKI, AND HONOR REQUIRES THAT WE ASK YOU TO PUT UP YOUR FEET A WHILE THERE AND LET US REPAY YOUR KINDNESS. BUT TODAY WE ARE ON AN URGENT JOURNEY, AND MUST CRAVE YOUR FORGIVENESS...

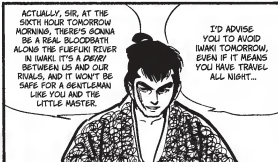


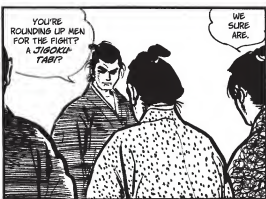
AND I'M SAI-NO-ME HANGORO, ACTING CHIEFTAIN OF THE HOUSE OF JIZO.



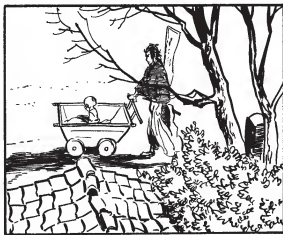
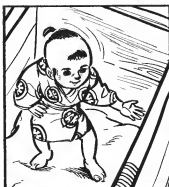
ACTUALLY, SIR, AT THE SIXTH HOUR TOMORROW MORNING, THERE'S GONNA BE A REAL BLOODBATH ALONG THE FUEFUKI RIVER IN IWAKI. IT'S A DEBILITY BETWEEN US AND OUR RIVALS, AND IT WON'T BE SAFE FOR A GENTLEMAN LIKE YOU AND THE LITTLE MASTER.

I'D ADVISE YOU TO AVOID IWAKI TOMORROW, EVEN IF IT MEANS YOU HAVE TRAVEL ALL NIGHT...

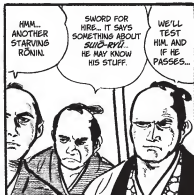
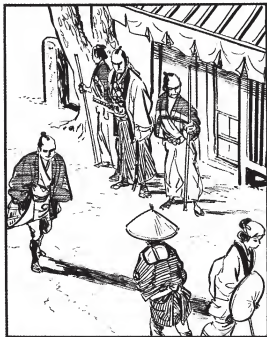


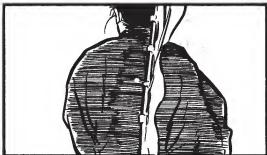


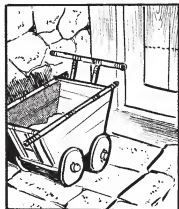
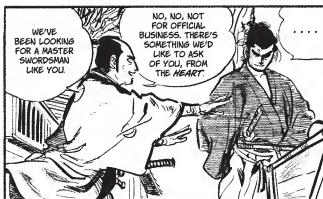


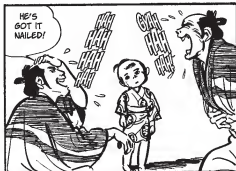
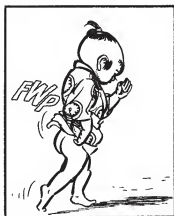




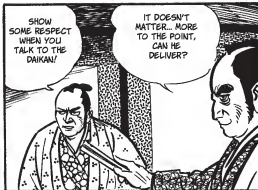


















HRN!

I WANT  
TO KNOW WHO  
I'M KILLING,  
AND WHY.

SAY  
NO, AND  
I WALK.



BUT  
WHY  
WOULD  
YOU  
WANT...

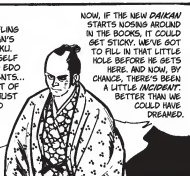
BECAUSE I'M *NOT*  
JUST A STARTING RÖNIN.  
BECAUSE I *DON'T* WANT ANY  
PROBLEMS LATER, AND ONE MORE  
THING, IF YOU'RE GOING TO *LIE*,  
I WANT YOU TO LIE LIKE YOUR  
LIFE DEPENDS ON IT.



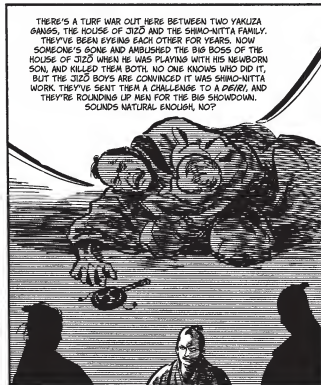
HEH HEH HEH.  
QUITE THE  
STRATEGIST.

FINE.  
TELL  
HIM.

IT'S LIKE THIS, SEE,  
THE SHÖGUNATE'S RESHUFFLING  
THE DAIKAN, AND A NEW MAN'S  
COMING OUT TO IWAKI-JUKU.  
KINSHIMODA-DONDO AND MYSELF  
ARE SLATED TO RETURN TO EDO  
AND GET OUR NEW ASSIGNMENTS...  
BUT THE FACT IS, SEE, A BIT OF  
THE LOCAL TAX REVENUE JUST  
HAPPENED TO FALL INTO  
OUR SLEEVES, IF YOU  
KNOW WHAT I MEAN.



NOW, IF THE NEW DAIKAN  
STARTS NOSING AROUND  
IN THE BOOKS, IT COULD  
GET STICKY. WE'VE GOT  
TO FILL IN THAT LITTLE  
HOLE BEFORE HE GETS  
HERE. AND NOW, BY  
CHANCE, THERE'S BEEN  
A LITTLE INCIDENT.  
BETTER THAN WE  
COULD HAVE  
DREAMED.

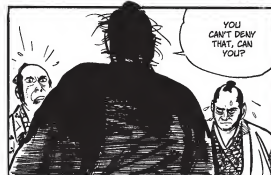
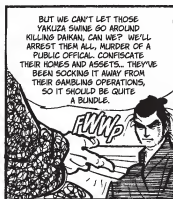
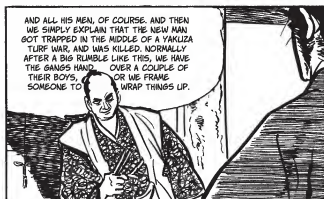
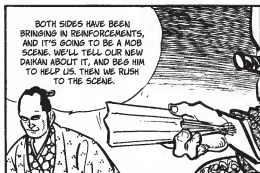


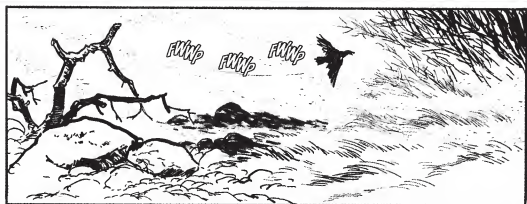
THERE'S A TURF WAR OUT HERE BETWEEN TWO YAKUZA  
GANGS, THE HOUSE OF JIZÖ AND THE SHIMO-NITTA FAMILY.  
THEY'VE BEEN EYEING EACH OTHER FOR YEARS. NOW  
SOMEONE'S GONE AND AMBUSHED THE BIG BOSS OF THE  
HOUSE OF JIZÖ WHEN HE WAS PLAYING WITH HIS NEWBORN  
SON, AND KILLED THEM BOTH. NO ONE KNOWS WHO DID IT,  
BUT THE JIZÖ BOYS ARE CONVINCED IT WAS SHIMO-NITTA  
WORK. THEY'VE SENT THEM A CHALLENGE TO A *DEIRI*, AND  
THEY'RE ROUNDING UP MEN FOR THE BIG SHOWDOWN.  
SOUNDS NATURAL ENOUGH, NO?

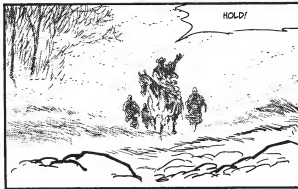
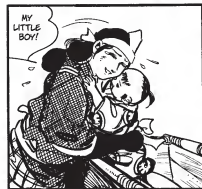
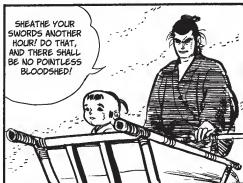


THE DEIRI STARTS AT  
THE SIXTH HOUR TOMORROW  
MORNING. THE NEW DAIKAN  
IS STAYING AT THE NEXT  
WAY STATION UP THE HIGHWAY.  
WE'VE BEEN DELAYING  
THE FORMAL TRANSFER OF  
POWER AS LONG AS  
WE CAN, SEE?

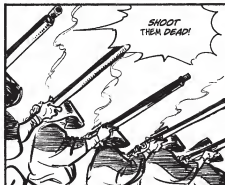


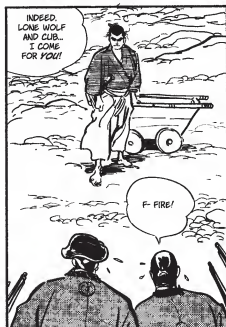
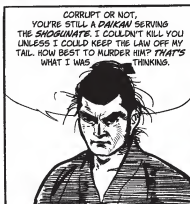
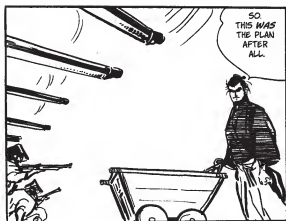




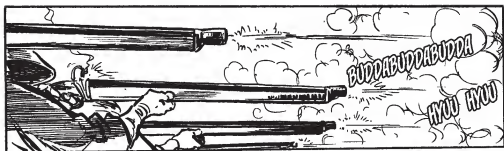




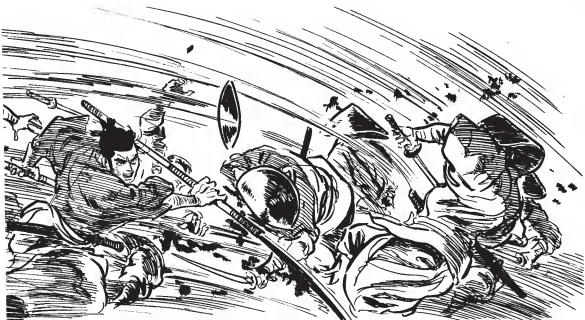


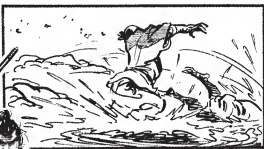














GOOD GOD!  
I DIDN'T ASK  
HIM TO GO  
THIS FAR.



WITH HIS CRIMES  
EXPOSED,  
KISHIMODA ALONE  
WOULD HAVE  
BEEN ENOUGH...



off!  
uhff!!







*the fifth*

# Suiō School Zanbatō













LET ME ASK  
BEFORE WE  
START...

IS THIS A  
FORMAL  
DUEL?



A FORMAL DUEL,  
THAT WILL LEAVE  
NO ANIMOSITY  
BEHIND



I'D LIKE  
PROOF OF  
THAT.

YOU ARE  
DISCONTENT  
WITH THE  
WITNESSES?



I AM ON MITO HAN  
TERRITORY. THE  
WITNESSES, ARE ALL  
MITO HAN *HANSHI*.



AND YOU ARE  
MITO'S  
*O-BANGASHIRA*,  
THE LEADER OF  
ITS ARMED FORCES.  
EVEN SHOULD I  
WIN TODAY...

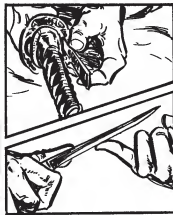
I MIGHT BE  
CARVED TO  
BITS BY  
YOUR  
*HANSHI*...



OR SHOT  
DOWN BY YOUR  
RIFLE COMPANIES  
OR ARCHERS. IN ANY  
CASE, I DOUBT I  
COULD LEAVE THE  
HAN ALIVE.

WHAT  
IS FORMAL  
ABOUT  
THAT?

I SEE...





\*DUEL



\*ACCEPTED: MONDO



MITO HAN.  
BESSHO  
MONDO.

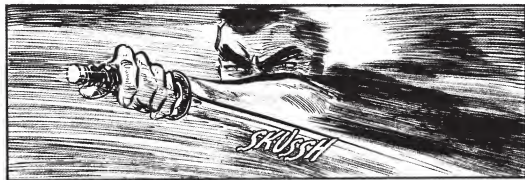
SAKUSHŪ  
RŌNIN.  
OGAMI ITTŌ.



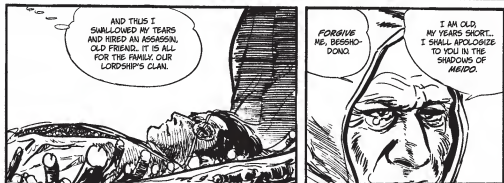


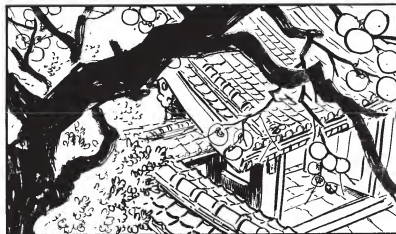
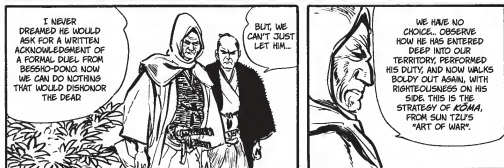
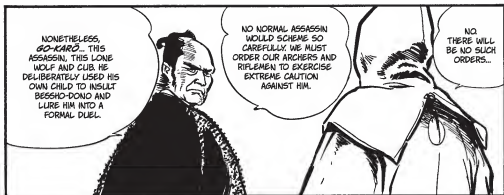




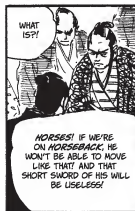
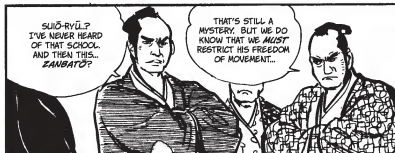
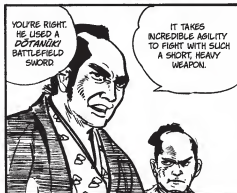
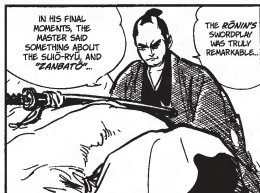
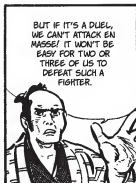






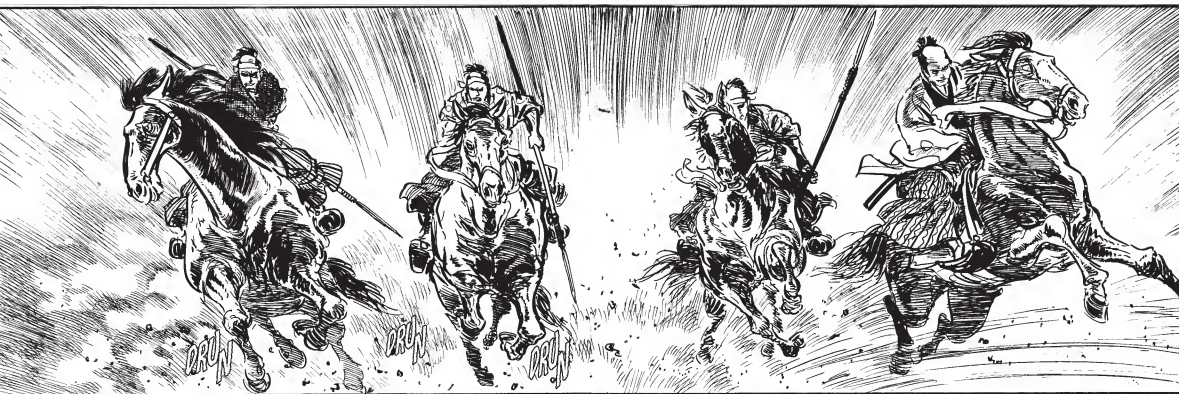
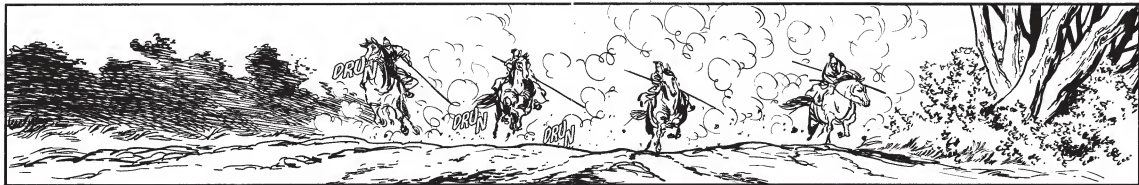


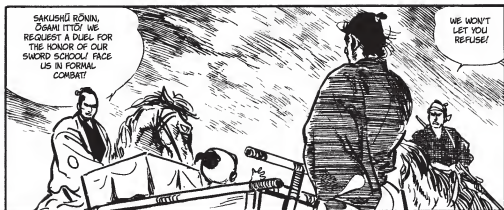


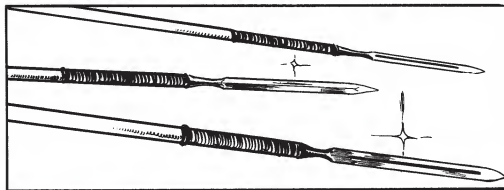
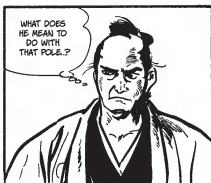




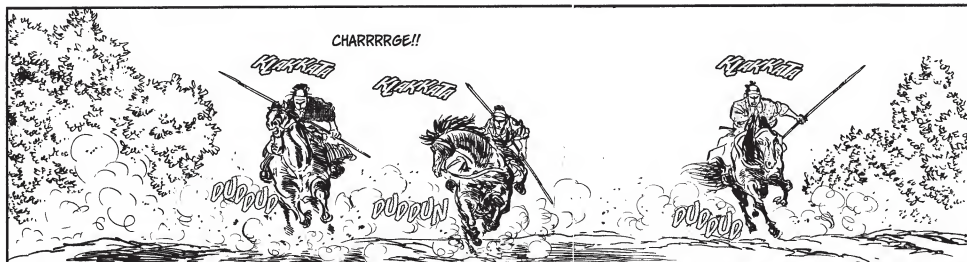


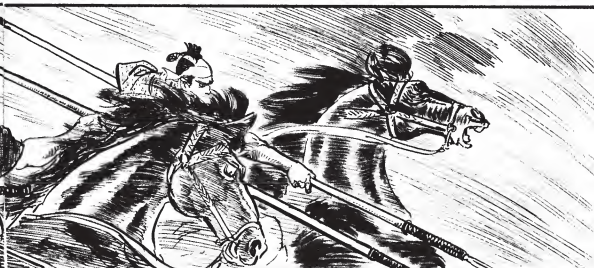






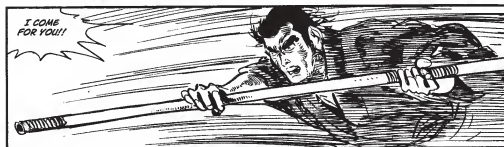




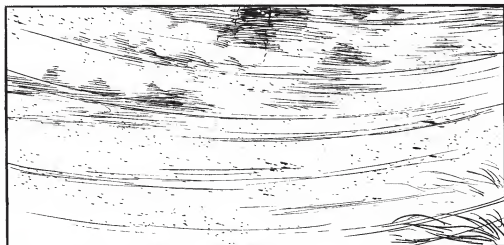
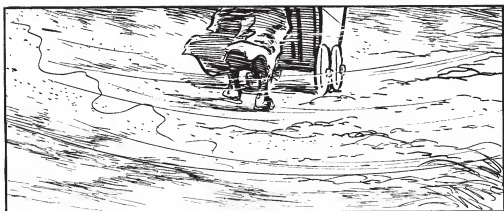
















*the sixth*

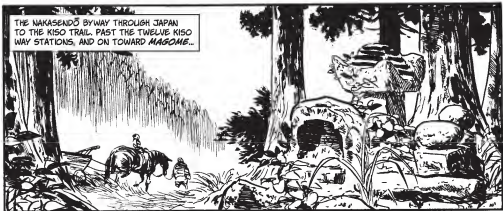
# Waiting for the Rains







THE NAKASENDO BYWAY THROUGH JAPAN  
TO THE KISO TRAIL. PAST THE TWELVE KISO  
WAY STATIONS, AND ON TOWARD MAGOME...



BURDOCK! BARLEY!



THE  
SEVEN  
SPRING  
FLOWERS,  
AND  
EELS!

THE LIL TYKE  
GOT GUTS, HE  
DOES. FOUR HOURS  
ON HORSEBACK AND  
HE DON'T CRY ONCE.  
LORDY, IF HE AIN'T  
DRIVIN' ME HALF  
CRAZY SINGIN' THAT  
SAME DANG SONG  
OVER AND OVER...



IS IT REALLY  
ALL RIGHT TO LEAVE  
'IM HERE? THE DEAL  
WAS I BRING HIM TO  
THE GATES OF AZAMI  
NUNNERY, AND THAT'S  
THE END OF IT...

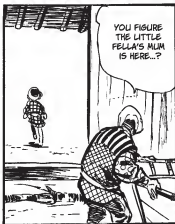


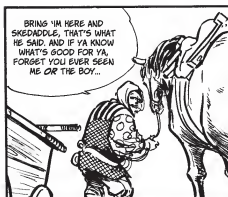
COULDN'T HARDLY  
SAY NO WHEN THAT  
UPSTANDIN'  
SAMURAI ASKED  
ME, COULD I? AND  
DIDN'T HE PAY ME  
A RIGHT NICE  
FEE FOR IT,  
TOO?

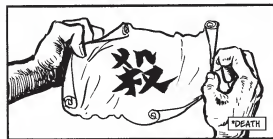
MISTER  
FIG!  
MISTER  
CARROT!



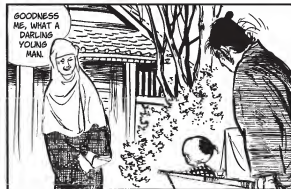
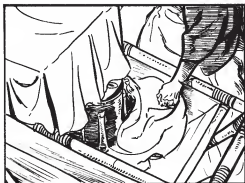
YOU FIGURE  
THE LITTLE  
FELLA'S MUM  
IS HERE...?



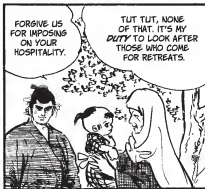








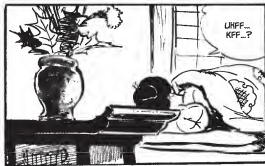
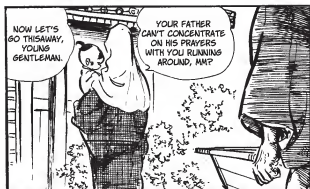
GOODNESS  
ME, WHAT A  
DARLING  
YOUNG  
MAN.

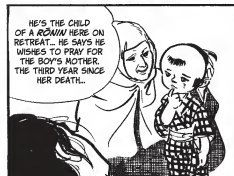
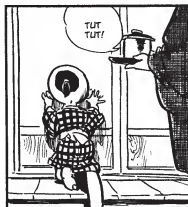


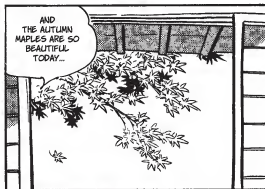
FORGIVE US  
FOR IMPOSING  
ON YOUR  
HOSPITALITY.

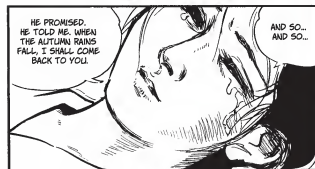
TUT TUT, NONE  
OF THAT. IT'S MY  
DUTY TO LOOK AFTER  
THOSE WHO COME  
FOR RETREATS.

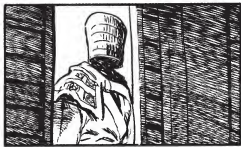


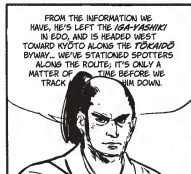
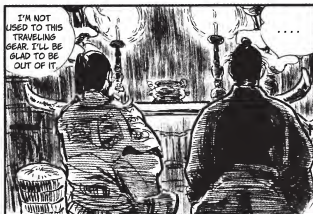














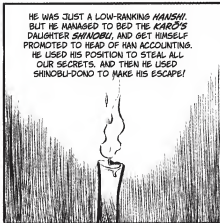
THREE YEARS SINCE OUR LORD'S CLAN AND OUR HAN WERE DISSOLVED BY THE SHOGUNATE, ALL BECAUSE OF THAT MAN. WE *HANSHI* HAVE BEEN PURSUING HIM EVER SINCE, WITH NOTHING TO LIVE ON BUT OUR *HATRED*. AT LAST WE FIND A CLUE TO HIS WHEREABOUTS AND HIRE *YOU*. AND NOW WHAT? YOU TAKE OUR *MONEY*, BUT YOU REFUSE TO BUDGE. WHAT GOOD IS THAT? WE LIVE FOR THE DAY THAT MAN IS KILLED, AND WE CAN PRESENT HIS HEAD BEFORE THE GRAVE OF OUR DEPARTED *TONO*.



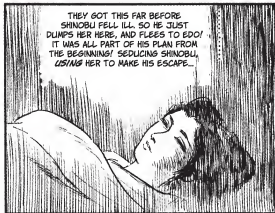
THE HEAD OF THAT DESPICABLE DOG!



HE WAS JUST A LOW-RANKING *HANSHI*. BUT HE MANAGED TO BED THE *KARO'S* DAUGHTER *SHINOBU*, AND GET HIMSELF PROMOTED TO HEAD OF HAN ACCOUNTING. HE USED HIS POSITION TO STEAL ALL OUR SECRETS. AND THEN HE USED *SHINOBU-DONO* TO MAKE HIS ESCAPE!

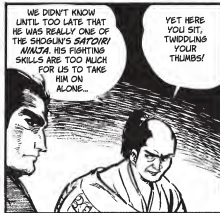


THEY GOT THIS FAR BEFORE *SHINOBU* FELL ILL. SO HE JUST DUMPS HER HERE, AND FLEES TO *EDO*! IT WAS ALL PART OF HIS PLAN FROM THE BEGINNING! SEDUCING *SHINOBU*, USING HER TO MAKE HIS ESCAPE...



WE DIDN'T KNOW UNTIL TOO LATE THAT HE WAS REALLY ONE OF THE SHOGUN'S *SATOIRI NINJA*. HIS FIGHTING SKILLS ARE TOO MUCH FOR US TO TAKE HIM ON ALONE...

YET HERE YOU SIT, TWIDDLING YOUR THUMBS!



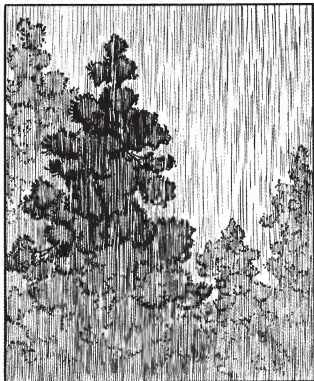
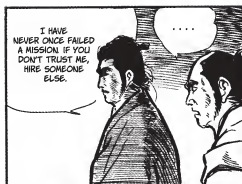
THE MAN STAYED HERE FOR SEVERAL DAYS TO TAKE CARE OF HIS AILING WIFE.

DON'T THAT SEEM A LONG TIME FOR A MAN WHO HAD ALREADY COMPLETED HIS MISSION?

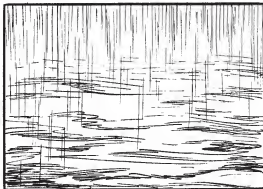
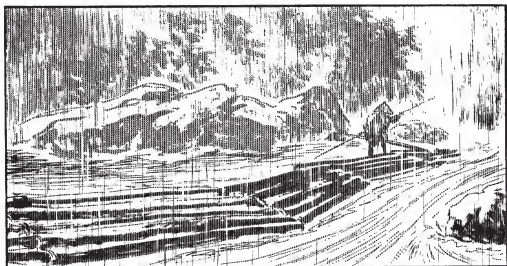
ARE YOU SUGGESTING HE *LOVED* HER?!

ABSD! YOU DON'T KNOW OF WHAT YOU SPEAK!



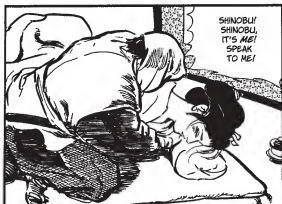






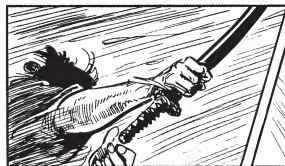
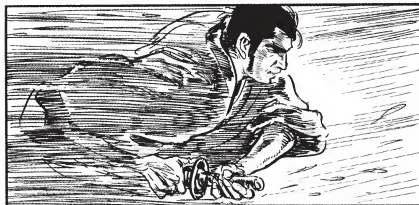


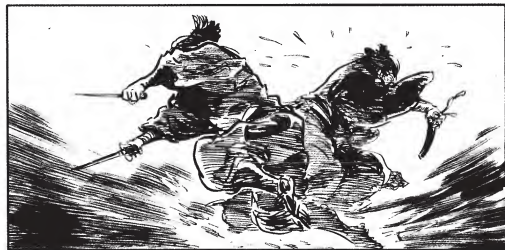








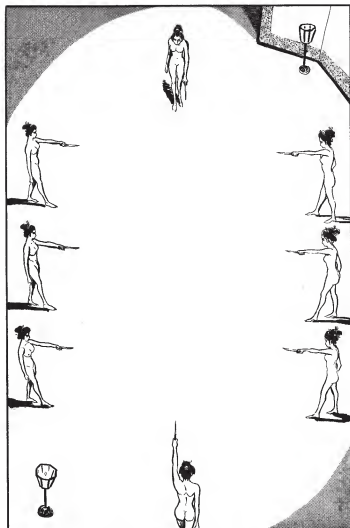


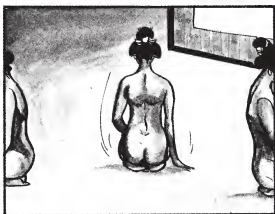
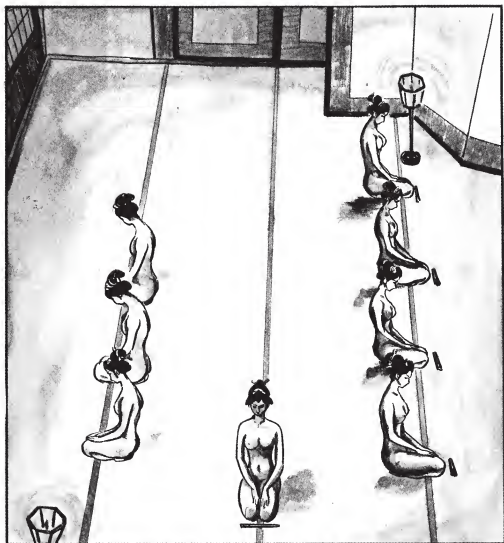




*the seventh*

# **Eight Gates of Deceit**

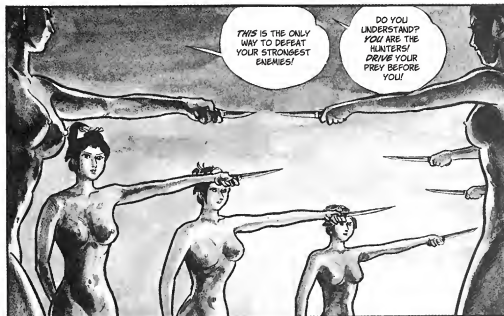


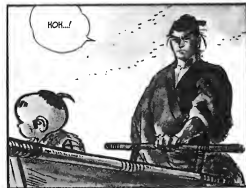
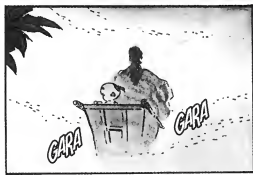
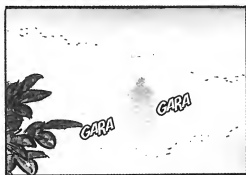














A NARROW  
SUSPENSION  
BRIDGE...

WE MUST BE  
PREPARED TO  
FIGHT HERE, BE  
IT A QUICK  
ASSAULT, OR  
THE FINAL  
BATTLE...

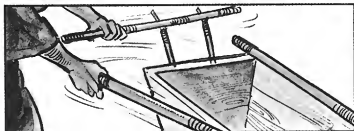


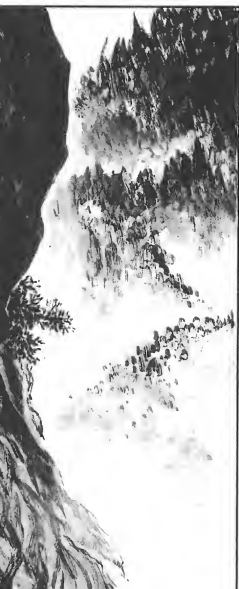
AM...



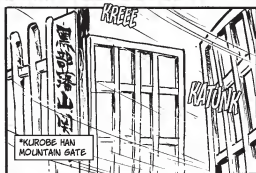
WHEEE!  
WHEEE!

DON'T ROCK  
THE BASKET,  
DAIGORO.

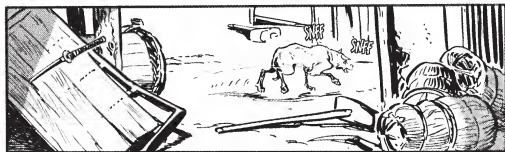


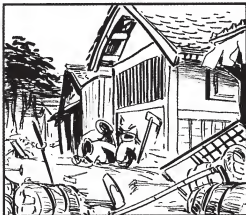


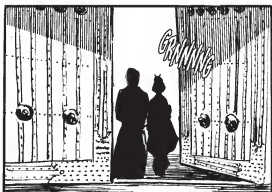


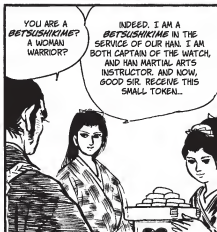
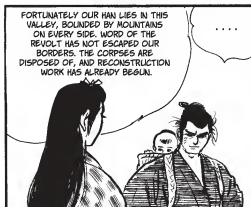
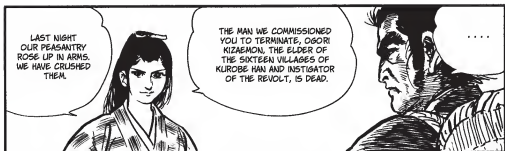




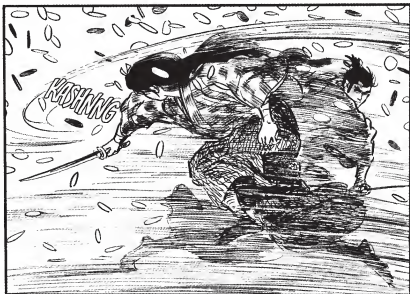
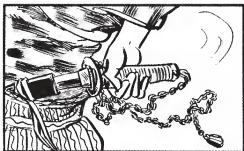


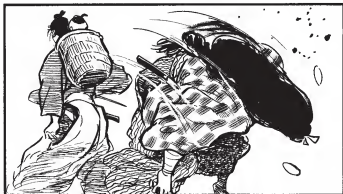
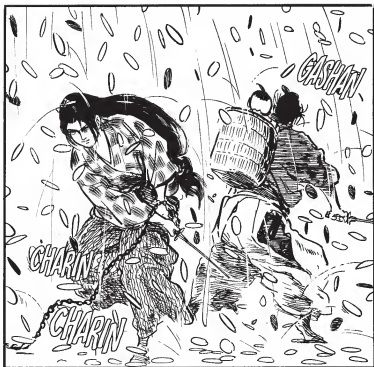


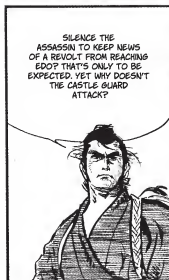
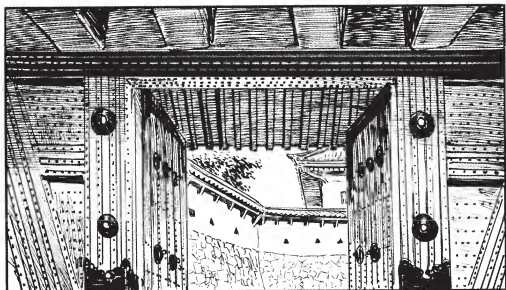


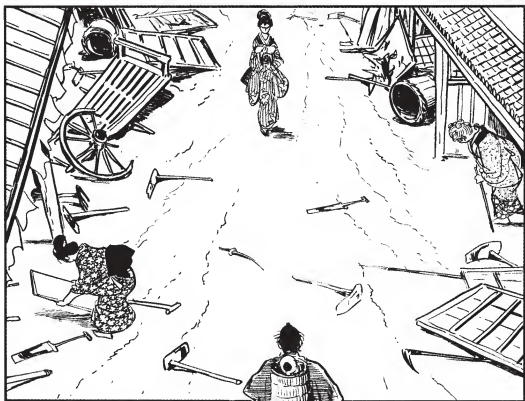


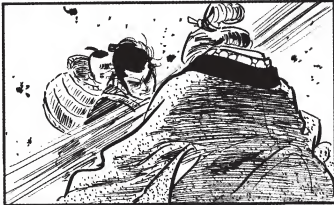
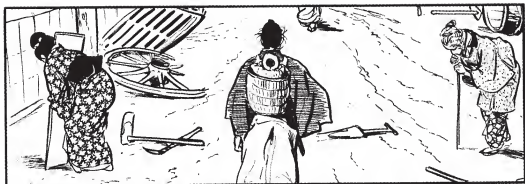






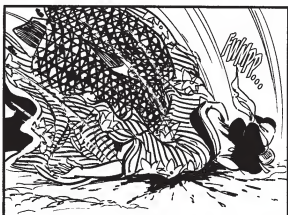


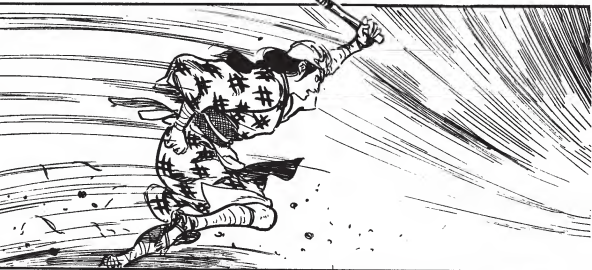


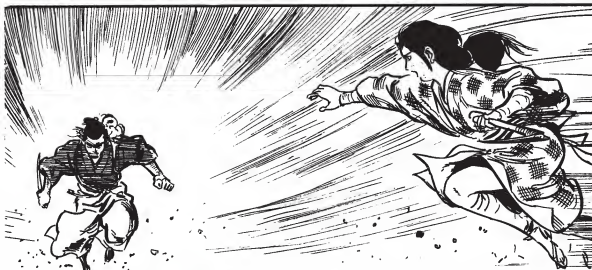


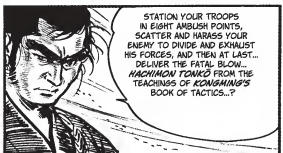
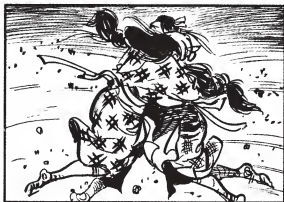


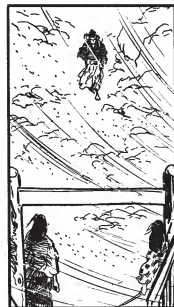


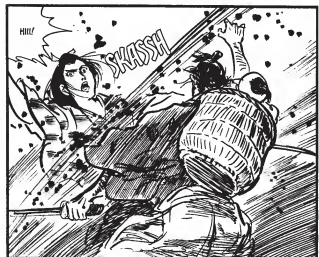
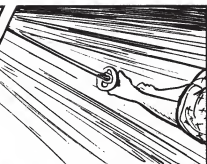
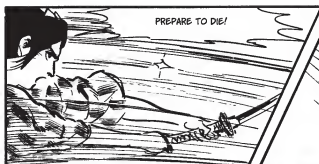




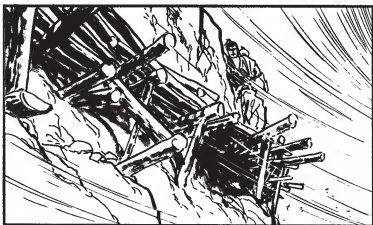


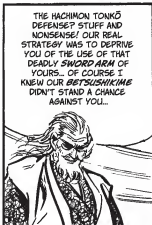
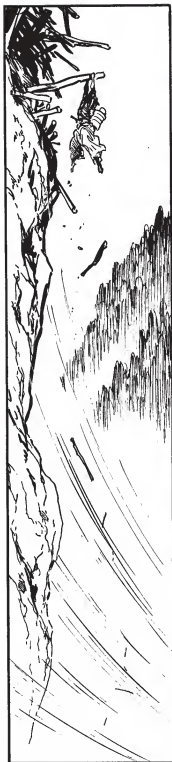


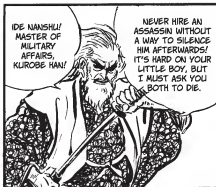
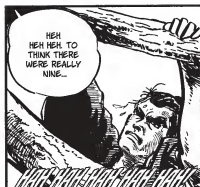








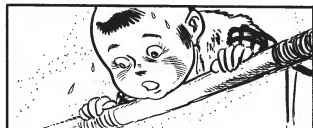
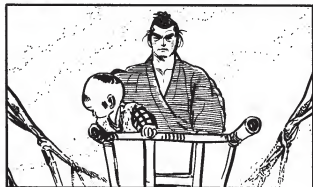
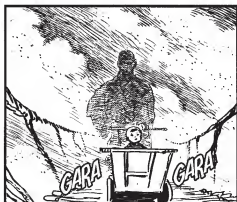
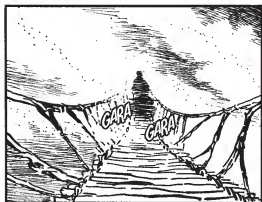
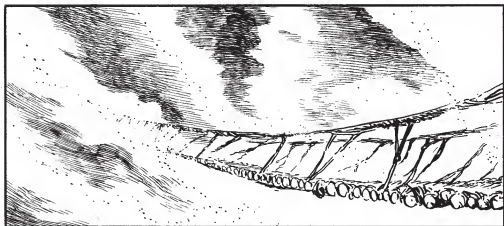








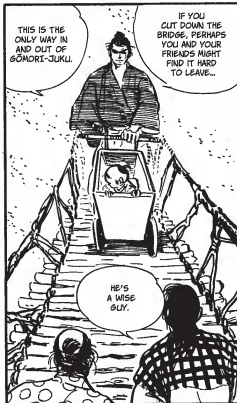
*the eighth*  
**Wings  
to  
the  
Bird,  
Fangs  
to  
the  
Beast**

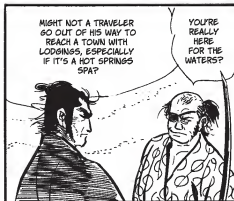


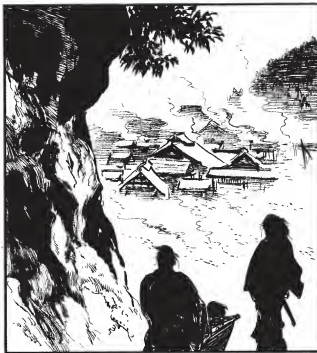
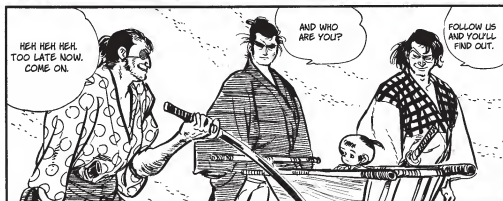




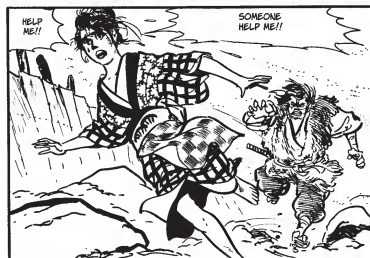




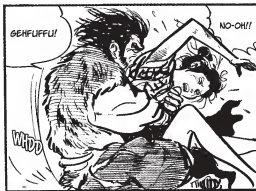
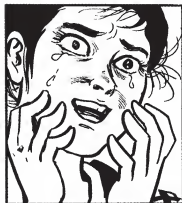


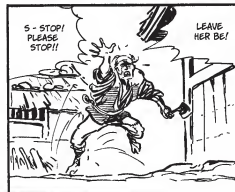
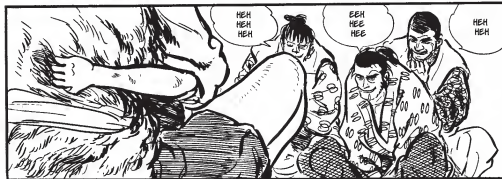
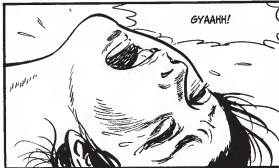
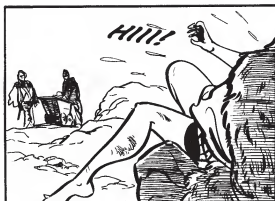


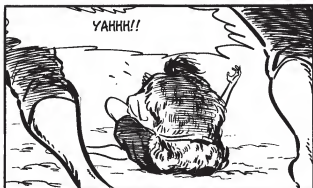


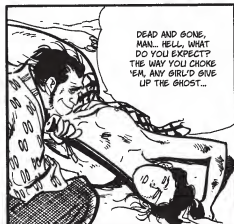




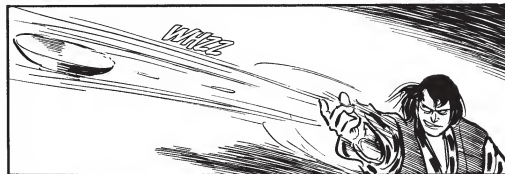




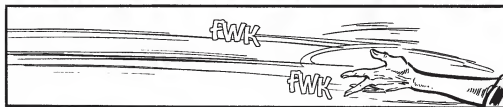


















HEH HEH HEH... CAN'T  
GUARANTEE YOU'LL BE  
ALIVE TOMORROW, BUT YOU  
SHOULD BEHAVE YOURSELF  
AS LONG AS YOU'RE IN  
THE LAND OF THE  
LIVING.



....

YOU MUSTA  
FIGURED OUT BY  
NOW THAT WE'RE  
TOBBICHO.



AND WHAT'LL  
HAPPEN TO YOU  
IF YOU RESIST...





IN THE BATH HOUSE, THERE  
WERE SEVEN OTHER HOT  
SPRING GUESTS...



ONUMA NO GENJI, THE YAKUZA



KUSHIMAKI O-SEN, THE  
PROSTITUTE AND CASUAL THIEF



SHOYOSHI, THE  
STRAIT-LACED MERCHANT



KEMURI NO JIROKICHI,  
THE PICKPOCKET

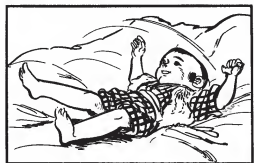
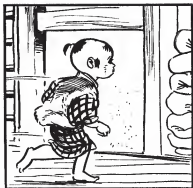


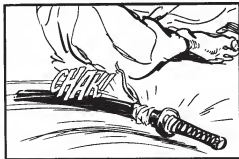
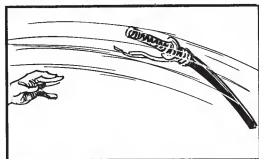
TEKKAN, THE  
WANDERING MONK

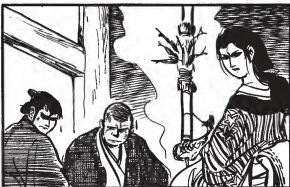


IZAWA, THE TUBERCULAR SAMURAI,  
AND HIS MAN SERVANT, ROKUZUKE











HMHP!  
GIVE IT A  
BREAK!

NO ONE'S  
STUPID ENOUGH  
TO FIGHT YOU,  
TOBBICHO.



THAT'S LIKE  
COMMITTING  
SUICIDE,  
RIGHT?

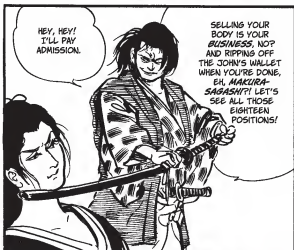
WHAT?!



THE MAN MAY BE  
A *RONIN* NOW, BUT HE'S  
STILL A SAMURAI! HE CAN'T GO  
AROUND SHOWING HE'S SCARED,  
OR AFRAID TO FIGHT, OR BEG  
FOR HIS LIFE IN FRONT  
OF ALL OF US!

WHY ELSE WOULD  
HE BE SITTING THERE  
WITH HIS EYES CLOSED,  
JUST TAKING IT? SO  
LEAVE HIM BE, WHY  
DON'T YOU? YOU'RE A  
BIG MAN NOW.

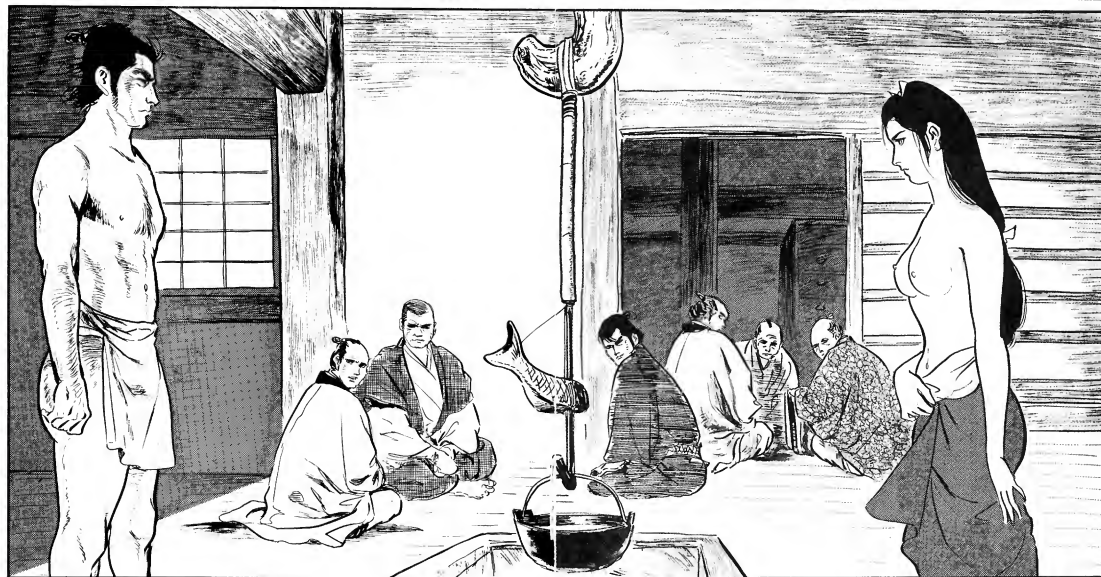
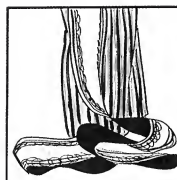






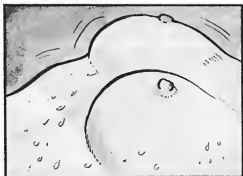




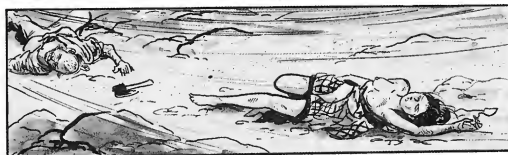


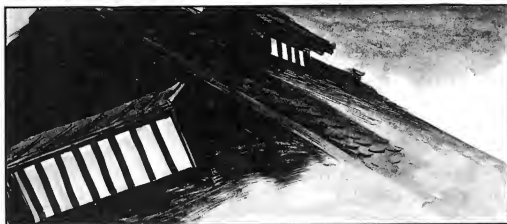


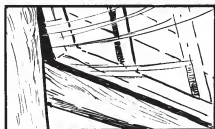
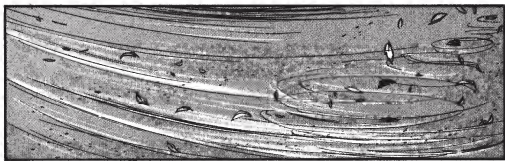


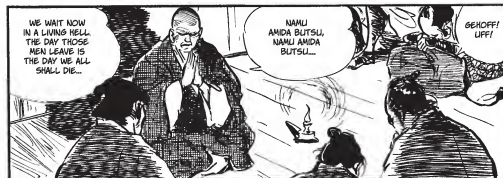
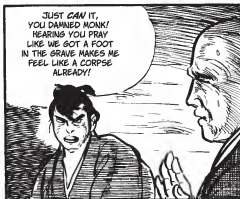
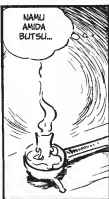








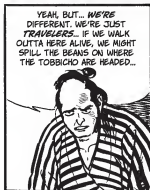






THAT AIN'T  
DECIDED YET,  
SEE?!

YEAH, THEY'RE ALL  
HIDING IN THEIR HOUSES,  
BUT THERE GOTTA BE TWENTY,  
THIRTY FOLK OR MORE LIVING  
IN THIS DAMN VILLAGE. EVEN  
THESE BASTARDS WOULDN'T  
KILL THAT MANY PEOPLE  
FOR NOTHING...



YEAH, BUT... WE'RE  
DIFFERENT. WE'RE JUST  
TRAVELERS... IF WE WALK  
OUTTA HERE ALIVE, WE MIGHT  
SPILL THE BEANS ON WHERE  
THE TOBBICHO ARE HEADED...

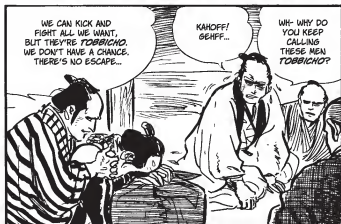


WHICH  
MEANS...

HE'S RIGHT!  
OH GOD!  
WE'RE DEAD  
MEN...! AARGH!



D- DAMN  
IT ALL! WE'RE  
JUST GONNA  
SIT HERE WAITING  
TO DIE?!  
SHIT!!



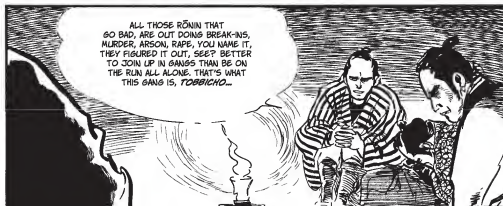
WE CAN KICK AND  
FIGHT ALL WE WANT,  
BUT THEY'RE **TOBBICHO**.  
WE DON'T HAVE A CHANCE.  
THERE'S NO ESCAPE...

KAHOFF!  
GEHFF...

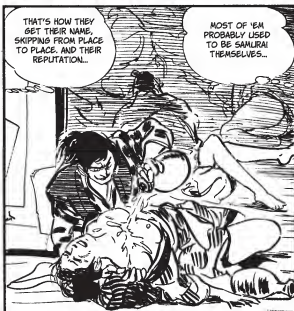
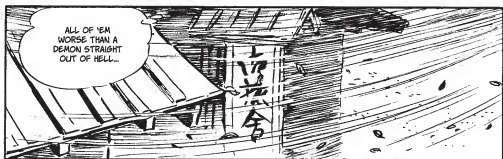
WH- WHY DO  
YOU KEEP  
CALLING  
THESE MEN  
**TOBBICHO**?



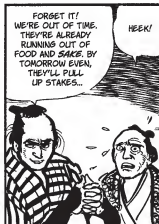
WHY... KHEFF!  
KEHOFF...  
WHY TOBBI- KAFF,  
KHAFF... CHO...  
KEHOFF...



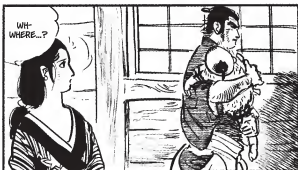
ALL THOSE RŌNIN THAT  
SO BAD, ARE OUT DOING BREAK-INS,  
MURDER, ARSON, RAPE, YOU NAME IT,  
THEY FIGURED IT OUT, SEE? BETTER  
TO JOIN UP IN GANGS THAN BE ON  
THE RUN ALL ALONE. THAT'S WHAT  
THIS GANG IS, **TOBBICHO**...

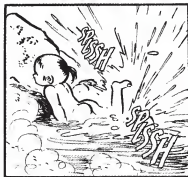
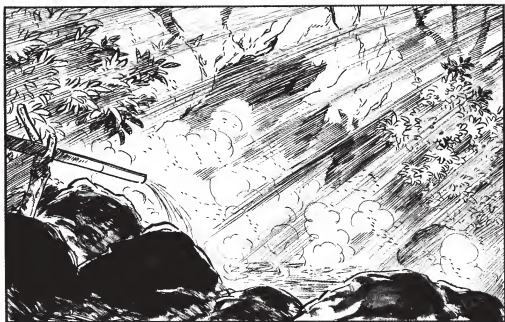


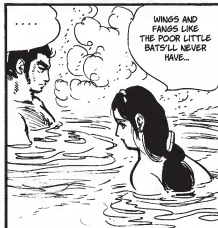
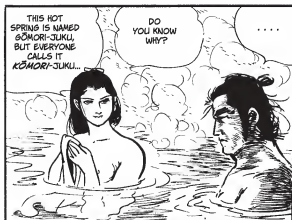


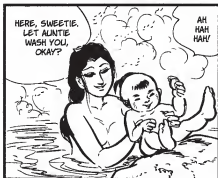
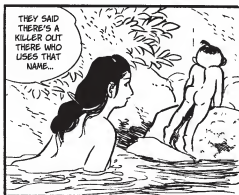
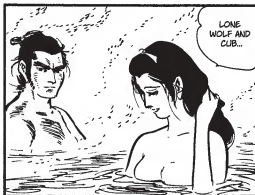
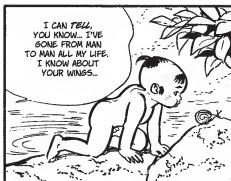




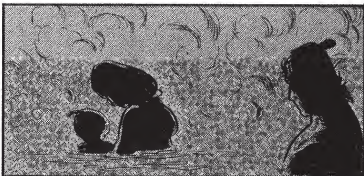
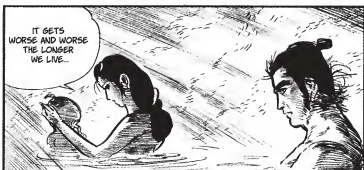


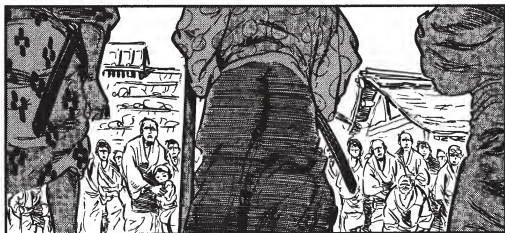




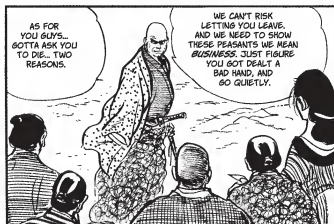


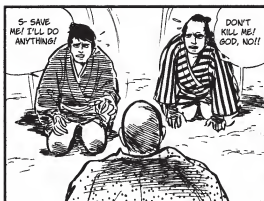






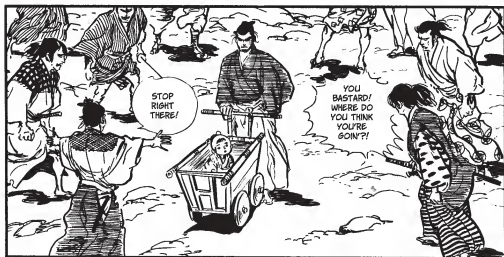
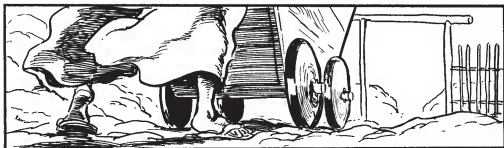
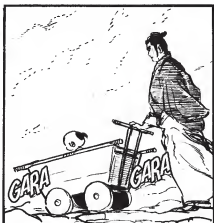
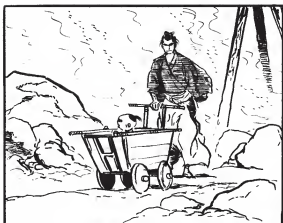






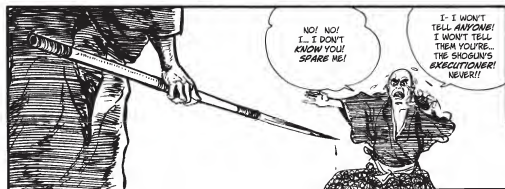


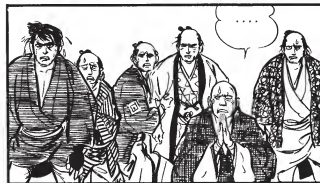






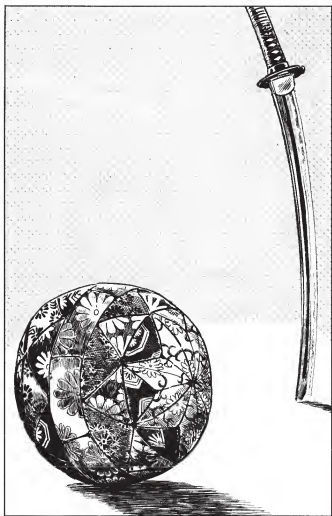












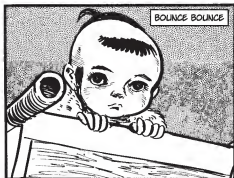
*the ninth*

# The Assassin's Road



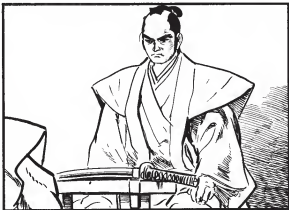
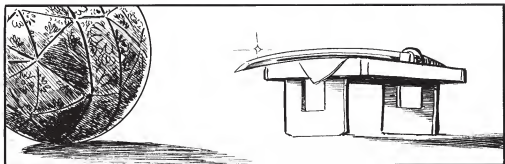


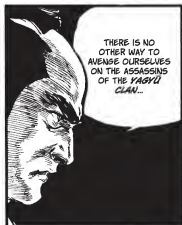
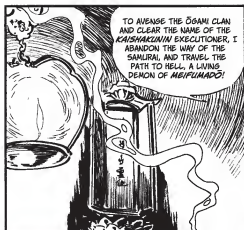
ROLLING DOWN, ROLLING DOWN  
THAT ONE GOES BOUNCE BOUNCE  
THIS ONE GOES BOUNCE BOUNCE

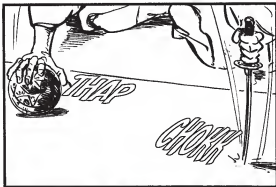


THAT ONE BOUNCE BOUNCE  
THIS ONE BOUNCE BOUNCE

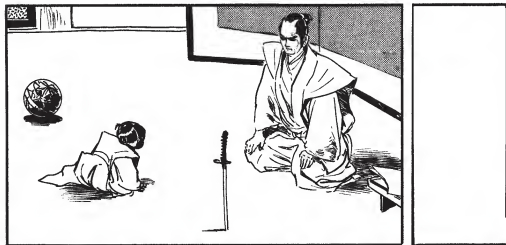


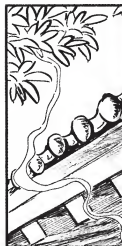
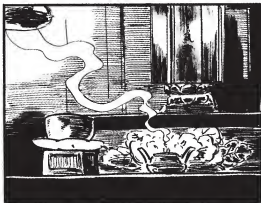
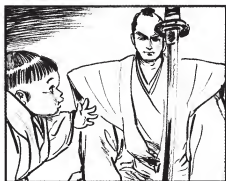




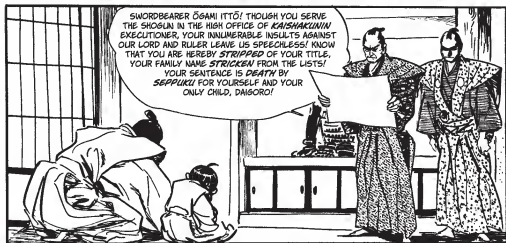
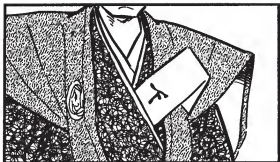




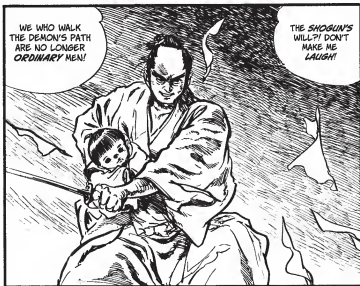






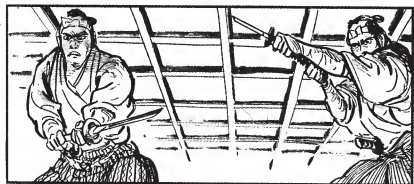
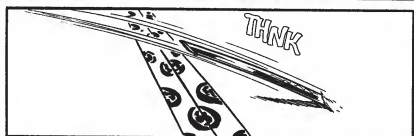




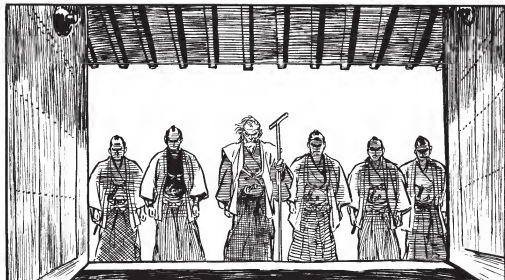
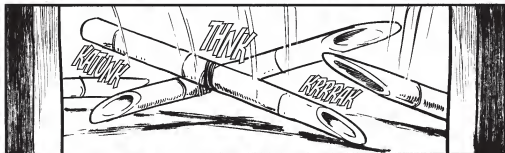




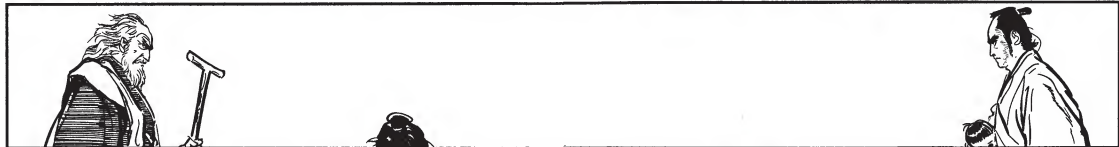
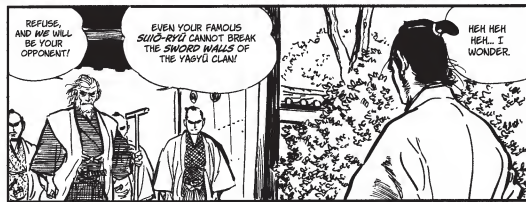


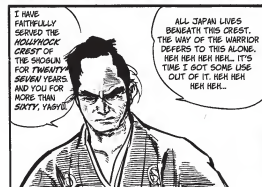
















W- WAIT!



SHED YOUR EXECUTIONER'S ROBES!  
DO THAT, AND THE YABYŪ CLAN SHALL  
CHALLENGE YOU AS *KAI*SHAKUNIN TO A  
FORMAL DUEL! IF VICTORY IS YOURS, I WILL  
LET YOU GO ANYWHERE, DO ANYTHING, SO  
LONG AS YOU NEVER SET FOOT IN  
EDO AGAIN!



AND IF  
I SAY...  
NO?



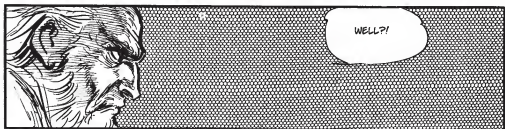
THE ASSASSINS  
OF THE YABYŪ CLAN  
SHALL PURSUE YOU  
TO THE ENDS OF  
THE EARTH...



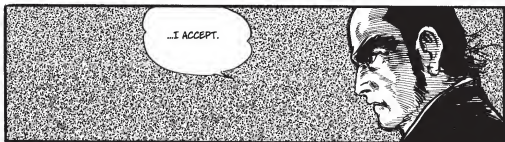
LO- LORD YABYŪ, YOU *MUSTN'T*  
PERVERT THE SHOGUN'S WILL!  
THIS PROMISE *CANNOT* STAND!

SILENCE!!  
ALL RESPONSIBILITY  
RESTS WITH ME!

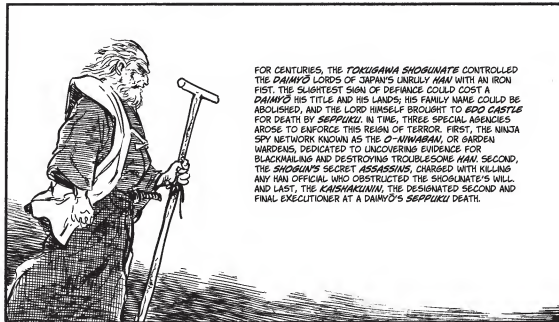
IF HE ABUSES  
THE CREST,  
IF THIS SCANDAL  
SPREADS, IT WILL  
SHAKE THE VERY  
AUTHORITY OF THE  
SHOGUNATE  
ITSELF!



WELL?!

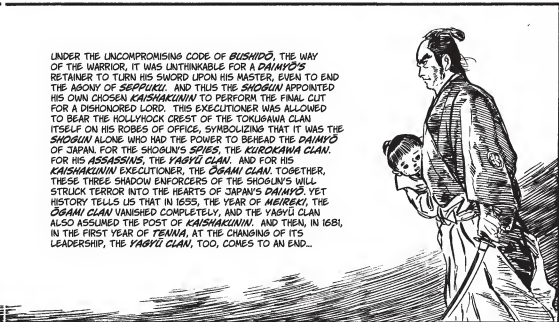


...I ACCEPT.

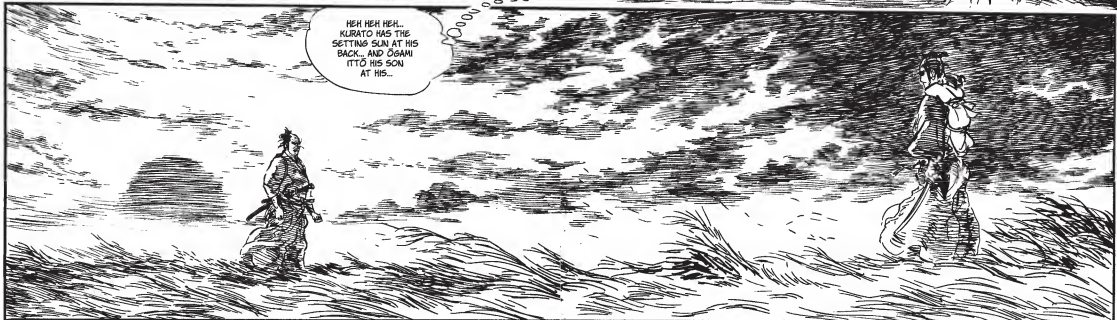


FOR CENTURIES, THE TOKUGAWA SHOGUNATE CONTROLLED THE DAIMYO LORDS OF JAPAN'S UNRULY HAN WITH AN IRON FIST. THE SLIGHTEST SIGN OF DEFIANCE COULD COST A DAIMYO HIS TITLE AND HIS LANDS; HIS FAMILY NAME COULD BE ABOLISHED, AND THE LORD HIMSELF BROUGHT TO EDO CASTLE FOR DEATH BY SEPPUKU. IN TIME, THREE SPECIAL AGENCIES AROSE TO ENFORCE THIS REIGN OF TERROR: FIRST, THE NINJA SPY NETWORK KNOWN AS THE *O-WIKHARU*, OR GARDEN WARDENS, DEDICATED TO UNCOVERING EVIDENCE FOR BLACKMAILING AND DESTROYING TROUBLE-SOME HAN. SECOND, THE SHOGUN'S SECRET ASSASSIN, CHARGED WITH KILLING ANY HAN OFFICIAL WHO OBSTRUCTED THE SHOGUNATE'S WILL. AND LAST, THE *KAISHAKUNIN*, THE DESIGNATED SECOND AND FINAL EXECUTIONER AT A DAIMYO'S SEPPUKU DEATH.

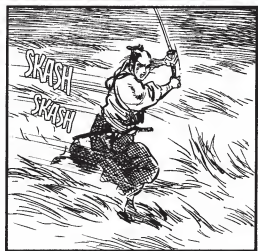
UNDER THE UNCOMPROMISING CODE OF *BUSHIDO*, THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR, IT WAS UNTHINKABLE FOR A DAIMYO'S RETAINER TO TURN HIS SWORD UPON HIS MASTER, EVEN TO END THE AGONY OF SEPPUKU. AND THUS THE SHOGUN APPOINTED HIS OWN CHOSEN *KAISHAKUNIN* TO PERFORM THE FINAL CUT FOR A DISHONORED LORD. THIS EXECUTIONER WAS ALLOWED TO BEAR THE HOLLYHOCK CREST OF THE TOKUGAWA CLAN ITSELF ON HIS ROBES OF OFFICE, SYMBOLIZING THAT IT WAS THE SHOGUN ALONE WHO HAD THE POWER TO BEHEAD THE DAIMYO OF JAPAN. FOR THE SHOGUN'S SPIES, THE *KUROKAWA CLAN*. FOR HIS ASSASSINS, THE *YASUJI CLAN*. AND FOR HIS *KAISHAKUNIN* EXECUTIONER, THE *OGAMI CLAN*. TOGETHER, THESE THREE SHADOW ENFORCERS OF THE SHOGUN'S WILL STRUCK TERROR INTO THE HEARTS OF JAPAN'S DAIMYO. YET HISTORY TELLS US THAT IN 1655, THE YEAR OF *HEIREKI*, THE *OGAMI CLAN* VANISHED COMPLETELY, AND THE *YASUJI CLAN* ALSO ASSUMED THE POST OF *KAISHAKUNIN*. AND THEN, IN 1681, IN THE FIRST YEAR OF *TEINNA*, AT THE CHANGING OF ITS LEADERSHIP, THE *YASUJI CLAN*, TOO, COMES TO AN END...

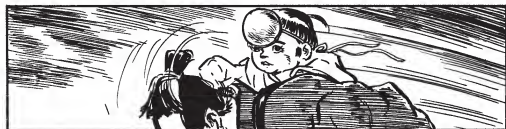


ASSASSIN  
AND EXECUTIONER!  
THIS STORY,  
"LOAN WOLF AND CUB,"  
IS ONE ANSWER TO  
THIS MYSTERY.

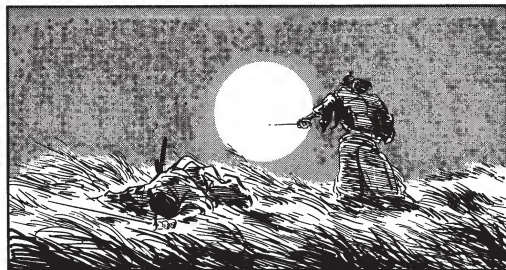
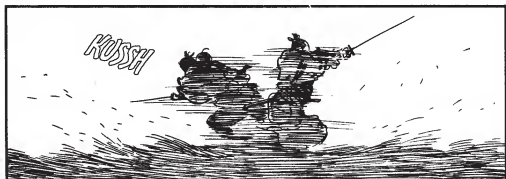


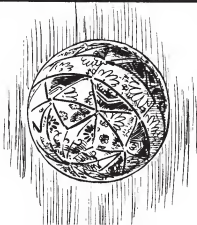
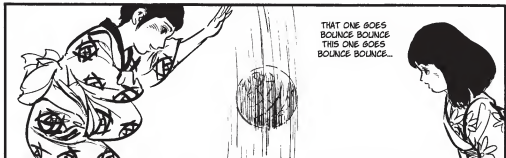
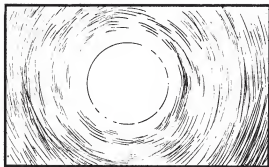
HEH HEH HEH...  
KURATO HAS THE  
SETTING SUN AT HIS  
BACK... AND OGAMI  
ITTO HIS SON  
AT HIS...











LONE WOLF AND CUB  
BOOK ONE: THE END  
TO BE CONTINUED



# GLOSSARY

## **ashigaru**

A foot soldier in the employ of a *daimyō*. lowest of the warrior ranks.

## **bangashira**

Commander of the guard. Each han had a standing guard — the *ban* — of samurai to protect the lord and castle. The *ō-bangashira* was the supreme commander of the guard, the general of the *han* army.

## **bushi**

A samurai. A member of the warrior class.

## **ō-metsuke**

Chief inspector. The supreme inspector of the shogunate, the J. Edgar Hoover of the Tokugawa power structure.

## **daikan**

The primary local representative of the shogunate in territories outside of the capital of Edo. The *daikan* and his staff collected taxes owed to Edo and oversaw public works, agriculture, and other projects administered by the central government.

## **daikansho**

The office of the *daikan*.

## **daimyō**

A feudal lord.

## **danzai**

The samurai's right to put to death anyone who insulted their honor.

## **deiri**

A fight between rival *yakuza* gangs. From their clothes, speech, and greetings, it is clear that the house of Jizō are *yakuza*, Japan's criminal syndicates. In the Edo period, *yakuza* were a common part of the landscape, running houses of gambling and prostitution. As long as they did not overstep their bounds, they were tolerated by the authorities, a tradition little changed in modern Japan.

## **dono**

A term of respect for a higher-ranking official or aristocrat. A more common term of respect among civilians is *sama*, indicating more respect than the most common *san*.

## **dōtanūki**

A battle sword, literally, "sword that cuts through torsos."

## **Edo**

The capital of medieval Japan.

## **fudasashi**

Merchant houses specializing in rice. They loaned gold to *han* governments, loans secured by the *han's* projected rice revenues.

## han

A feudal domain.

## hanshi

Samurai in the service of a *han*.

## hollyhock crest

Each samurai family had a family crest considered synonymous with the clan itself. The Tokugawa clan crest was a three-leaved hollyhock. To point one's sword toward the shogun's crest was to point your sword toward the shogun himself, an unforgivable act of treason.

## honmaru

The large, central keep of a Japanese castle.

## Iga-yashiki

There were two main ninja clans in Japan, from the Iga and Kōga regions respectively. The Iga ninja served the shogunate. The Iga-yashiki (residence) was their base in Edo.

## jigoku-tabi

Literally, "a journey to hell." When *yakuza* would go ask allies to help them in a fight.

## juku

Way station. The major byways through Japan during the Edo period had way stations a day's walk apart with inns, tea houses, and other facilities for the traveler. The names of these old way stations still remain in many Japanese cities.

## kaishaku

A second. In the rite of *seppuku*, a samurai was allowed death with honor by cutting up his own abdomen. After the incision was complete, the second would perform *kaishaku*, severing the samurai's head for a quick death. The second was known as a *kaishakunin*.

## Kannon

Buddist goddess of mercy.

## karō

Elders, usually the senior advisor to a *daimyō*, the lord of a *han*. Since the *daimyō* was required to alternate each year between life in his castle in the *han* and his residence in Edo, the capital and the seat of the Tokugawa shogunate, there was usually an *Edo-karō* (Edo elder) and a *kuni-karō* (*han* elder), who would administer affairs in Edo or in the *han* when their lord was away.

## kenshiyaku

The shogunate official present at an execution to confirm the death of the person to be killed.

## koku

1. A bale of rice. The traditional measure of a *han's* wealth, a measure of its agricultural land and productivity.
2. Standard time unit in the Edo period. Approximately two hours long, further sub-divided into three equal parts.

## kōmori

A bat.

## Kongming

A famous general and tactician who lived during the warring states period in ancient China., born 181 A.D., died 234 A.D.

## kuramoto

Merchant houses. Under the Confucian social order imposed by the Tokugawa shogunate, merchants ranked a lowly fourth in Japan's four-strata caste society. But, in fact, by the middle Edo period the merchant class had gained tremendous wealth and power by managing the assets of the *han* and selling *han* rice and other products. Many *han* fell deeply into debt to the big merchant houses.

## makura-sagashi

Literally, pillow searcher. A wandering thief who preyed on other travelers, stealing their valuables from under their pillows while they slept.

## meido

The afterlife. The land after death. Believed to be a place of darkness. Only a few Buddhist sects described a division between heaven and hell.

## meifumadō

The Buddhist hell, the way of demons and damnation.

## metsuke

Inspector, a post combining the functions of chief of police and chief intelligence officer.

## namu amida butsu

One of the most common of all Buddhist chants, calling for mercy in the world to come.

## ogamu

To pray.

## o-niwaban

"One in the garden." A ninja. The secret agent of the shogunate, heard but never seen.

## rōnin

A masterless samurai. Literally, one adrift on the waves. Members of the samurai caste who have lost their masters through the dissolution of *han*, expulsion for misbehavior, or other reasons. Prohibited from working as farmers or merchants under the strict Confucian caste system imposed by the Tokugawa shogunate, many impoverished *rōnin* became "hired guns" for whom the code of the samurai was nothing but empty words.

## ryō

A gold piece.

## ryū

Often translated as "school." The many variations on swordsmanship and other martial arts were passed down from generation to generation to the offspring of the originator of the technique or set of techniques, and to any *deishi* students that sought to learn from the master. The largest schools had their own *dōjō* training centers, and scores of students. An effective swordsman had to study the different techniques of the different schools to know how to block them in combat. Many *ryū* also had a set

of special, secret techniques that were only taught to school initiates.

### **Sakushū**

A town in what is today Okayama prefecture.

### **Sanzu-no-kawa**

The river Sanzu, the Japanese equivalent of the river Styx. On their way to the afterlife, the dead must take boats across the river Sanzu.

### **satoiri ninja**

Ninja in the sato (homeland). In addition to the ninja based in Edo, the shogunate placed ninja undercover in the various *han* of rival lords. These moles would monitor dissident *han* and gather evidence that could be used to blackmail or dissolve a *han* when it stepped out of line.

### **seppuku**

The right to kill oneself with honor to atone for failure, or to follow one's master into death. Only the samurai class was allowed this glorious but excruciating death. The abdomen was cut horizontally, followed by an upward cut to spill out the intestines. When possible, a *kaishakunin* performed a beheading after the cut was made to shorten the agony.

### **shima**

The zone of death.

### **shinobi**

Ninja. The *yama-metsuke* work undercover, unlike the *dai-metsuke* in Edo.

### **Sun Tzu**

The great 500 B.C. Chinese military strategist, author of the classic *Sun Tzu Bingfa* ("The Art of War").

### **Tōkaidō**

The most important of the Edo-era travel routes, connecting Edo with the "*kamigata*" region of Kyōto and Ōsaka. Now traversed by freeways and high-speed "bullet" trains.

### **Tokugawa**

The Tokugawa clan, the warlord family that unified Japan following its victory at the battle of Sekigahara in 1600, and ruled until 1867 from its castle in the city of Edo. The period is commonly known as the Edo period. The shogun was both the head of the Tokugawa clan and the head of the Tokugawa *bakufu* — the shogunate government — that ran national policy and kept the often unruly *han* at heel.

### **tono**

Lord, *daimyō*. Sometimes used as a form of address, as in *tono-sama*.

### **toseinin**

Literally, "rootless one," one who travels the world. A euphemism for a wandering *yakuza*.

# KAZUO KOIKE

Though widely respected as a powerful writer of graphic fiction, Kazuo Koike has spent a lifetime reaching beyond the bounds of the comics medium. Aside from co-creating and writing the successful *Lone Wolf and Cub* and *Crying Freeman* manga, Koike has hosted television programs; founded a golf magazine; produced movies; written popular fiction, poetry, and screenplays; and mentored some of Japan's best manga talent.

*Lone Wolf and Cub* was first serialized in Japan in 1970 (under the title *Kozure Okami*) in *Manga Action* magazine and continued its hugely popular run for many years, being collected as the stories were published, and reprinted worldwide. Koike collected numerous awards for his work on the series throughout the next decade. Starting in 1972, Koike adapted the popular manga into a series of six films, the *Baby Cart Assassin* saga, garnering widespread commercial success and critical acclaim for his screenwriting.

This wasn't Koike's only foray into film and video. In 1996, *Crying Freeman*, the manga Koike created with artist Ryoichi Ikegami, was

produced in Hollywood and released to commercial success in Europe and is currently awaiting release in America.

And to give something back to the medium that gave him so much, Koike started the *Gekiga Sonjuku*, a college course aimed at helping talented writers and artists — such as *Ranma 1/2* creator Rumiko Takahashi — break into the comics field.

The driving focus of Koike's narrative is character development, and his commitment to character is clear: "Comics are carried by characters. If a character is well created, the comic becomes a hit." Kazuo Koike's continued success in comics and literature has proven this philosophy true.



# GOSEKI KOJIMA

Goseki Kojima was born on November 3, 1928, the very same day as the godfather of Japanese comics, Osamu Tezuka. While just out of junior high school, the self-taught Kojima began painting advertising posters for movie theaters to pay his bills.

In 1950, Kojima moved to Tokyo, where the postwar devastation had given rise to special manga forms for audiences too poor to buy the new manga magazines. Kojima created art for *kami-shibai*, or “paper-play” narrators, who would use manga story sheets to present narrated street plays. Kojima moved on to creating works for the *kashi-bon* market, bookstores that rented out books, magazines, and manga to mostly low-income readers. He soon became highly popular among *kashi-bon* readers.

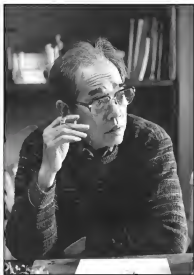
In 1967, Kojima broke into the magazine market with his series *Dojinki*. As the manga magazine market grew and diversified, he turned out a steady stream of popular series.

In 1970, in collaboration with Kazuo Koike, Kojima began the work that would seal his reputation, *Kozure*

*Okami* (*Lone Wolf and Cub*). Before long the story had become a gigantic hit, eventually spinning off a television series, six motion pictures, and even theme song records. Koike and Kojima were soon dubbed the “golden duo” and produced success after success on their way to the pinnacle of the manga world.

When *Manga Japan* magazine was launched in 1994, Kojima was asked to serve as consultant, and he helped train the next generation of manga artists.

In his final years, Kojima turned to creating original graphic novels based on the movies of his favorite director, Akira Kurosawa. Kojima passed away on January 5, 2000 at the age of 71.





# THE RONIN REPORT

*by Tim Ervin*

As with most occasions of men taking up arms, the reason for the evolution of the samurai warrior was simple: to protect the people of an organized society, to control a population in that society, and to go forth and conquer new lands. From the time Japan was first occupied it was besieged with violence. Waves of immigrating peoples washed across the shores of the Japanese island chain. From the North came a Caucasian race from what is now southern Russia, and from the South came what would be later known as Korean peoples, carrying Chinese customs and religions. Naturally, the societies clashed and elbowed for room on the islands. This struggle for land and survival fueled the structures of a society in need of protection from outside influences, and as we see in society today, in order to defend one's people from another's it is necessary to raise arms and join together in force. Thus samurai warriors naturally evolved in what would become Japan.

Legend, however, tells the story differently, involving elemental gods forming Japan through divine influence and

bestowing weapons with supernatural powers upon mortal warriors. One of these warriors was Prince Yamato. In his book *Samurai: The Story of a Warrior Tradition*, Harry Cook asserts that Prince Yamato was “in many ways a role model for (future) samurai.” Yamato was fearless, cunning, and highly skilled in martial arts. Legend says that he was given the divine sword “Cloud Cluster” (or “Sword of the Village of the Clustering Clouds”) in order to help him quell the barbarian Ainu people, a largely Caucasian people who defied bureaucratic order and competed for land. In an interesting aside, Cook writes in his book that Prince Yamato’s father, Emperor Keiko, was by legend the first to apply the title “shogun” to one of his generals, and the term “shogun” literally translates to “barbarian-subduing general.”

When the first shogun was named such, the imperial court was strong in influence but short on military prowess. Imperial forces sent to subdue the barbarians were often defeated miserably, and, in order to defend their claims, many land owners began training and keeping armed retainers (or knights). These retainers form the basic root of what we know as samurai. As the overlords became more

powerful and claimed imperial descent, they began to clash amongst one another for control of land and vassals. Samurai warriors acted as pawns in power struggles, and those who were the most cunning, skilled, and powerful succeeded in claiming more land and influence for their lords. Constant wars and intermarrying between powerful clans led to consolidation of power, and eventually a small number of clans were fighting large-scale, bloody wars. These wars continued for hundreds of years, relying on generation after generation of familial revenge and hunger for land and power. These civil wars, as well as wars against invading forces such as Kublai Khan's massive Mongolian onslaught in the late 12th century, brought refinement to samurai warrior tactics and changed the focus of weaponry from the bow and arrow to the sword.

*(to be continued)*



*Lone Wolf and Cub* (Kozure Okami in Japan) is acknowledged worldwide for the brilliant writing of series creator Kazuo Koike and the groundbreaking cinematic visuals of the late Goseki Kojima. Creating unforgettable imagery of stark beauty, kinetic fury, and visceral thematic power, the epic samurai adventure has influenced a generation of visual storytellers both in Japan and in the West.

*"It takes you to another time, and to a frightening, alien land, windswept and gray. Koike and Kojima tell their story masterfully and artfully, portraying a man, a boy, and a country on their journey into Hell."*

— Frank Miller

- EISNER AWARD WINNER
- HARVEY AWARD WINNER

GRAPHIC NOVEL / MANGA



Front cover illustration  
by FRANK MILLER  
and LYNN VARLEY

子連れ狼